

**Evaluation of  
Existing and Proposed  
AREAS OF CRITICAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN**

**for the  
Uncompahgre  
Planning Area**

**February 2013**



**US Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Uncompahgre Field Office  
2465 South Townsend Avenue  
Montrose, Colorado 81401**

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# **Uncompahgre Field Office Resource Management Plan**

## **Evaluation of Existing and Proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern for the Uncompahgre Planning Area**

February 2013

Prepared by:

US Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Uncompahgre Field Office  
Montrose, Colorado

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### *Acronyms and Abbreviations*

<b>ACRONYM OR ABBREVIATION</b>	<b>COMPLETE PHRASE</b>
ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CNAP	Colorado Natural Areas Program
CNHP	Colorado Natural Heritage Program
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
GUSG	Gunnison sage grouse
IBA	Important Bird Area
NCA	National Conservation Area
ONA	Outstanding Natural Area
PCA	Potential Conservation Area
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RNA	Research Natural Area
SWCR	Southwest Canyon Riparian Habitat
UFO	Uncompahgre Field Office
USFS	United States Forest Service
WCC	Western Colorado Congress
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WSERC	Western Slope Environmental Resource Council

## ***1.0 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

As part of the land use planning process for the Uncompahgre Resource Management Plan (RMP), a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) interdisciplinary team reviewed twenty-four proposals submitted for consideration as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs).

External sources (including other agencies and the public) submitted twelve nominations, BLM specialists submitted nine nominations (two are the same as from external sources), and five are existing ACECs. The team analyzed the proposals to determine whether the areas are within the planning area and if they contain values that meet established relevance and importance criteria for ACEC designation. Areas meeting the criteria are identified as potential ACECs and are fully considered for designation and management in the RMP. Areas not meeting the criteria were dropped from further consideration. Twenty-three areas were found to meet the relevance and importance criteria.

## 2.0 - INTRODUCTION

The BLM Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) is revising the 1985 San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (RMP) and 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP in order to provide a single comprehensive plan to guide the management of BLM land and federal mineral estate within the Uncompahgre Planning Area (planning area). In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and BLM Manual 1613, the BLM is required to give priority to the designation and protection of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) during the land use planning process.

As shown in Figure 1, the planning area encompasses portions of Montrose, Delta, Gunnison, Ouray, San Miguel, and Mesa counties in southwestern Colorado and consists of the UFO excluding the Gunnison Gorge and Dominguez-Escalante national conservation areas (NCA). Approximately 675,800 acres of public surface land and 964,300 acres of federal mineral estate lie within the planning area boundary.

Analysis and findings in this report pertain only to lands managed by the BLM and comply with FLPMA Section 202 (43 US Code 1712[c][3]), 43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.7-2, and BLM Manual 1613 (BLM 1988a).

### 2.1 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

An ACEC is defined as BLM-administered land where special management attention is needed to protect the relevant and important values (detailed in Section 3.2) of the area from irreparable damage. The BLM designates ACECs administratively through land use plans. No other agency uses this form of designation.

### 2.2 Special Management Attention

*Special management attention* refers to management prescriptions developed during RMP preparation expressly to protect the important and relevant values of an area from the potential effects of proposed actions deemed to be in conformance with the terms, conditions, and decisions of the RMP (BLM Manual 1613.12). These management measures would not be necessary or prescribed if the critical and important features were not present.

# INTRODUCTION

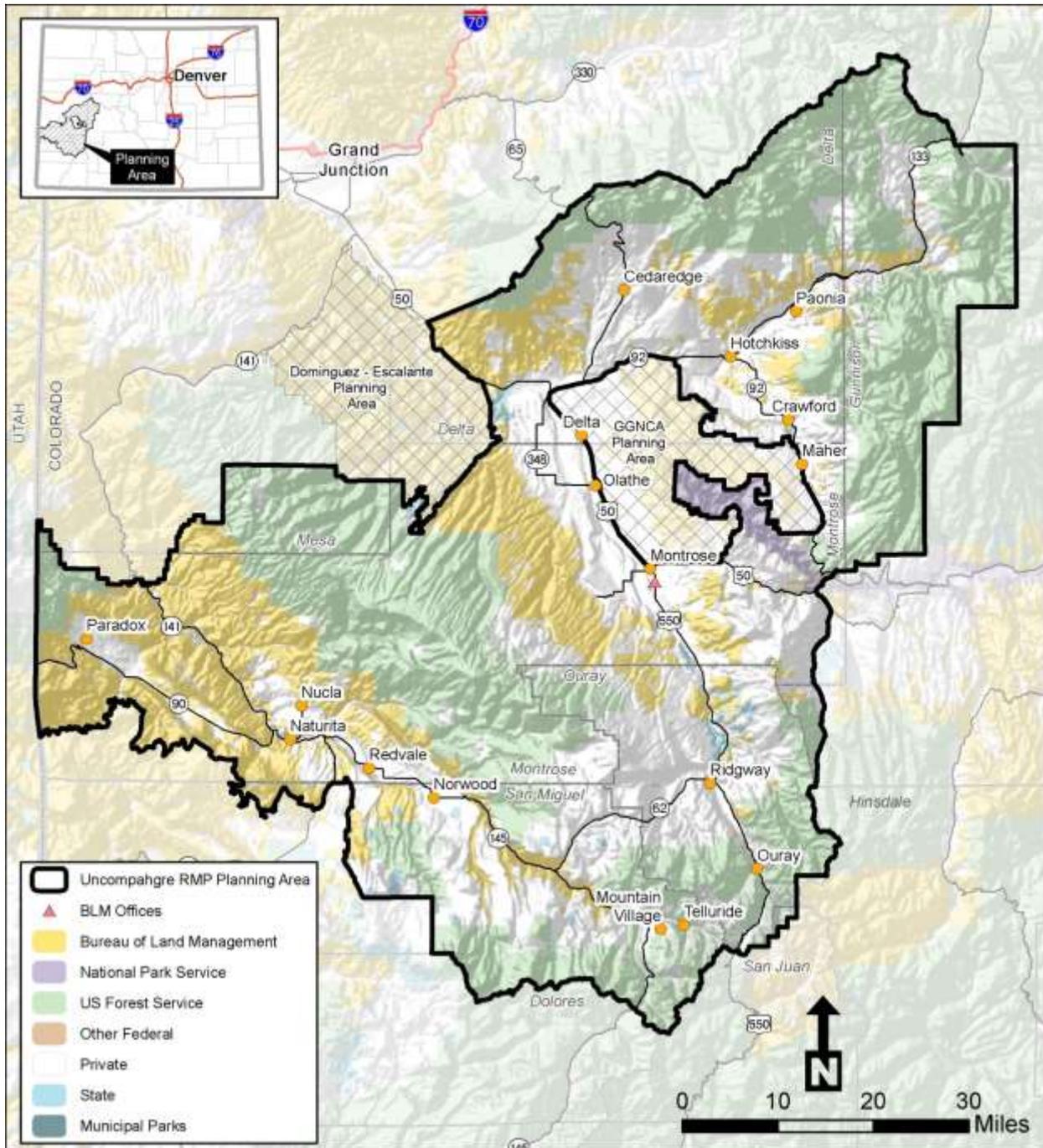


Figure 1 - Uncompahgre RMP Planning Area

## 3.0 - STEPS IN THE ACEC PROCESS

This section summarizes major steps in the identification and evaluation of ACECs.

### 3.1 Nomination

While BLM staff, other agencies, and the public may nominate an ACEC at any time, ACECs are only designated during the BLM land use planning process. Existing ACECs are also reconsidered during the process.

The UFO solicited ACEC nominations from the public during RMP scoping. At public meetings, the UFO displayed a panel describing special management areas and distributed a fact sheet on ACECs, along with a map showing current ACECs in the planning area. The fact sheet and map were also made available on the planning webpage at: ([http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ufo/uncompahgre\\_rmp.html](http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ufo/uncompahgre_rmp.html)). Both the fact sheet and display panel are shown in Appendix A and B of this report. The fact sheet contains the following statement:

*The BLM wants your input...*

Do you know of any areas within the planning area that meet the criteria for becoming an ACEC? Any individual or organization may nominate an ACEC during the public scoping period. The nomination should describe the area's special values. Information on why the area meets relevance and importance criteria (43 CFR 1610.7-2) must be included in the nomination.

### 3.2 Relevance and Importance Criteria

Nominations for ACECs must meet criteria of **relevance** and **importance** as defined in 43 CFR 1610.7-2. This report considers only these criteria, and does not discuss management prescriptions. Relevance and importance are further defined in BLM Manual 1613.1 as follows.

#### Relevance

In order to meet the criterion for relevance, an area must possess “significant historic, cultural, or scenic value; a fish or wildlife resource or other natural system or process; or natural hazard.”

An area has relevance if it contains *one or more* of the following:

1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).

## STEPS IN THE ACEC PROCESS

2. A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).
3. A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features). For the purposes of the UFO's evaluation, an area also meets the criteria for relevance if it contains a plant species or community ranked G1 through G3 or S1 through S3 by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). CNHP rankings are defined in Table I on the following page.
4. Natural hazards (including but not limited to areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action may meet the relevance criteria if it is determined through the resource management planning process that it has become part of a natural process.

### Importance

To meet the importance criterion, the value, resource, system, process or hazard resource must “have substantial significance and value.” This generally requires qualities of more than local significance and special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource, or qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change. A natural hazard can be important if it is a significant threat to human life or property.

An area meets the importance criterion if *one or more* of the following characteristics are present:

1. Has more than locally significant qualities that give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.
2. Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.
3. Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).
4. Has qualities that warrant highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.
5. Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.

## STEPS IN THE ACEC PROCESS

**Table I - Colorado Natural Heritage Program Element Imperilment Rankings**

<b>CNHP GLOBAL RARITY RANKING</b> (based on the range-wide status of a species)	
G1	Critically imperiled globally because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences, or very few remaining individuals), or because of some factor of its biology making it especially vulnerable to extinction. (Critically endangered throughout its range).
G2	Imperiled globally because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences), or because of other factors demonstrably making it very vulnerable to extinction throughout its range. (Endangered throughout its range).
G3	Very rare or local throughout its range or found locally in a restricted range (21 to 100 occurrences). (Threatened throughout its range.)
G4	Apparently secure globally, though it might be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.
G5	Demonstrably secure globally, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.
<b>CNHP STATE RARITY RANKING</b> (based on status of species [relative abundance of individuals] in each state)	
S1	Critically imperiled in state because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences, or very few remaining individuals), or because of some factor of its biology making it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the state. (Critically endangered in state).
S2	Imperiled in state because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences), or because of other factors demonstrably making it very vulnerable to extirpation from the state. (Endangered or threatened in state).
S3	Rare in state (21 to 100 occurrences).

### **3.3 Consideration of Potential ACECs**

Each area meeting the relevance and importance criteria must be identified as a potential ACEC and must be considered as RMP alternatives are developed. Each potential ACEC must be proposed for designation in at least one alternative in the Draft RMP (BLM Manual 1613.2.22B). As RMP alternatives are developed, management prescriptions are fully developed. Management prescriptions *may* (not must) vary across the alternatives.

### **3.4 Comments on Proposed ACECs**

The public had an opportunity to comment on the designation recommendations included in a draft report released on July 16, 2010, with the public comment period ending on August 20, 2010. The comments were considered prior to finalizing the report. The public will also have the opportunity to comment on the draft RMP.

## STEPS IN THE ACEC PROCESS

### **3.5 Designation**

Designation of ACECs occurs when the record of decision for the EIS is signed and the RMP is approved.

## 4.0 - ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

This section describes each existing and proposed area and provides an evaluation of whether or not it meets the criteria for relevance and importance. Figure 2 on page 10 shows all existing and proposed ACECs and ACEC expansions in the planning area. A description, evaluation, and map of each area follows.

### 4.1 Existing and Proposed ACECs Considered

The following table shows ACECs that the BLM is considering; those in existence under the current RMPs, and those being proposed by the BLM and public. The table also shows whether an existing or proposed ACEC meets the relevance and importance criteria.

**Table 2 - Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area**

ACEC NAME	STATUS	RELEVANT AND IMPORTANT?	RELEVANCE CRITERIA SUPPORTED	IMPORTANCE CRITERIA SUPPORTED	NOTES
Needle Rock ACEC/ Outstanding Natural Area	Existing	Yes	1, 3	1, 2, 3	
Adobe Badlands ACEC/Outstanding Natural Area	Existing	Yes	2, 3	1, 2, 3	
Salt Desert Shrub Ecosystem ACEC/ Research Natural Area	BLM and External Proposal	Yes	2, 3	1, 2, 3	Includes existing Adobe Badlands ACEC/ Outstanding Natural Area
Fairview South ACEC/Research Natural Area	Existing	Yes	3	1, 2, 3	
Fairview South ACEC/Research Natural Area <i>(Note: Larger than existing ACEC)</i>	BLM Proposal	Yes	2, 3	1, 2, 3	BLM-proposed expansion includes existing Fairview South ACEC/ Research Natural Area

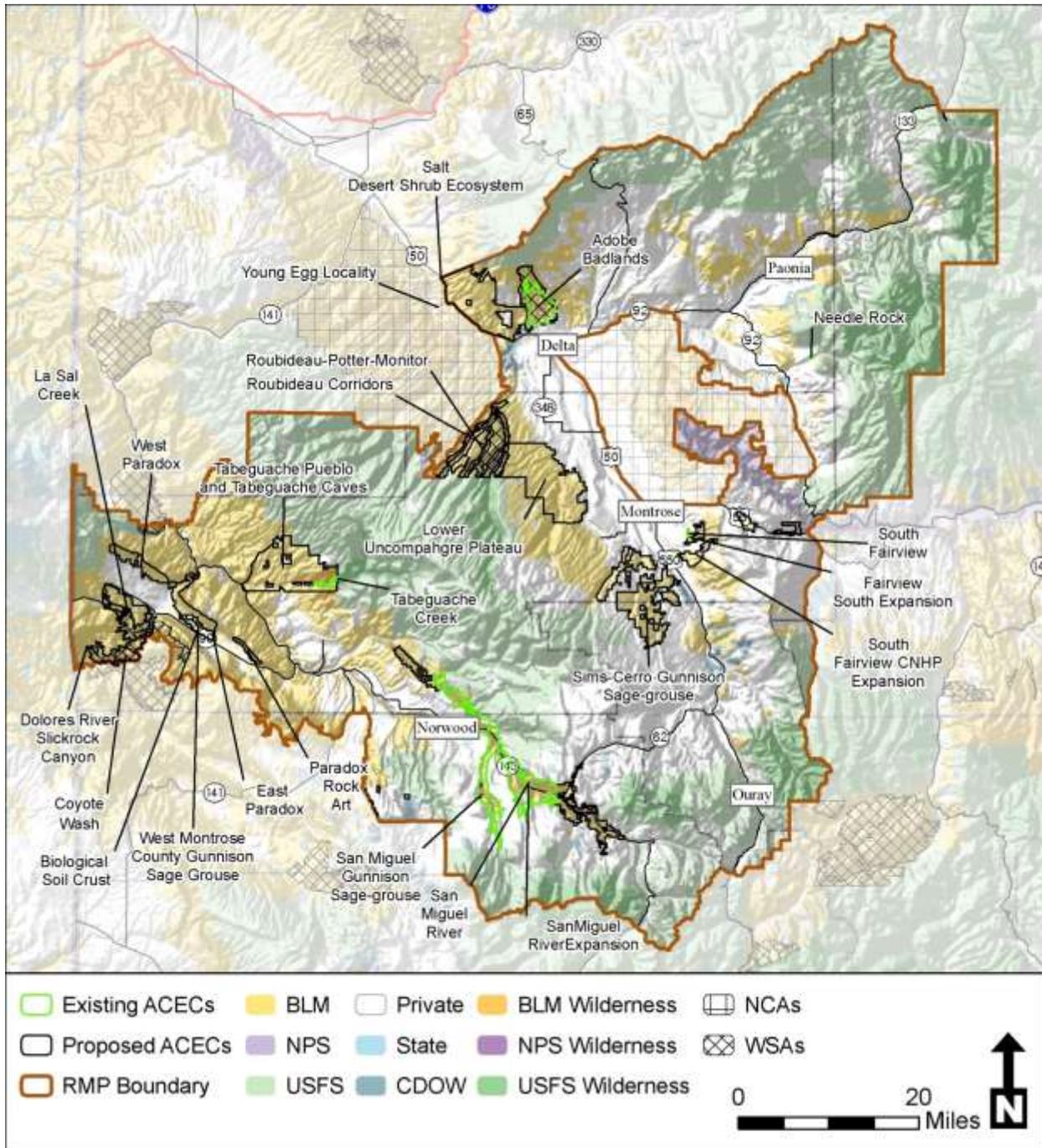
**ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS**

<b>ACEC NAME</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>RELEVANT AND IMPORTANT?</b>	<b>RELEVANCE CRITERIA SUPPORTED</b>	<b>IMPORTANCE CRITERIA SUPPORTED</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
Fairview South ACEC/Research Natural Area <i>(Note: Proposed ACEC is larger than existing one)</i>	External Proposal	Yes	2, 3	1, 2, 3	Citizens group and CNHP proposed expansion. Includes existing Fairview South ACEC/ Research Natural Area
Roubideau Corridors ACEC	BLM Proposal	Yes	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	
Roubideau-Potter-Monitor ACEC	External Proposal	Yes	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	
Lower Uncompahgre Plateau Cultural ACEC	External Proposal	Yes	1	1, 2	
San Miguel River ACEC	Existing	Yes	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	
San Miguel River ACEC <i>(Note: Proposed ACEC is larger than existing one)</i>	BLM and External Proposal	Yes	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	BLM and external group proposed expansion of the existing San Miguel River ACEC
San Miguel Gunnison Sage Grouse ACEC	External Proposal	Yes	2	2, 3	
West Montrose County Gunnison Sage Grouse ACEC	External Proposal	No	None	3	Does not meet the relevance criteria
Sims Cerro Gunnison Sage Grouse ACEC	External Proposal	Yes	2	2, 3	
Dolores Slick Rock Canyon ACEC and _____ Dolores River Slick Rock Canyon ACEC	BLM Proposal  BLM Proposal	Yes	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	These are two different sized proposed ACECs

**ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS**

<b>ACEC NAME</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>RELEVANT AND IMPORTANT?</b>	<b>RELEVANCE CRITERIA SUPPORTED</b>	<b>IMPORTANCE CRITERIA SUPPORTED</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
La Sal Creek ACEC	External Proposal	Yes	2, 3	1, 2, 3	
Coyote Wash ACEC	External Proposal	Yes	3	1, 2, 3	
East Paradox ACEC and _____ Biological Soil Crust ACEC	BLM Proposal _____ BLM Proposal	Yes	2, 3	1, 2, 3	The Biological Soil Crust ACEC is within the East Paradox ACEC
West Paradox ACEC	BLM Proposal	Yes	2, 3	1, 2, 3	
Paradox Rock Art ACEC	External Proposal	Yes	1	1, 2	
Tabeguache Pueblo/Tabeguache Caves ACEC	External Proposal	Yes	1	1, 2	
Tabeguache Creek ACEC/Outstanding Natural Area	Existing	Yes	1	1, 2	
Young Egg Locality ACEC	External Proposal	Proposed ACEC is within the Dominguez-Escalante NCA, which is not within the Uncompahgre RMP planning area; this proposed ACEC will not be considered in the Uncompahgre RMP.			

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS



**Figure 2 - Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area**

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

### I. NEEDLE ROCK ACEC/ONA (Existing)

---

**Status:** Existing

**General Location:** In Delta County, Colorado approximately four miles northeast of the town of Crawford, north of the Smith Fork River, and south of Missouri Flats.

**Acreage:** 80

**Significance:** The Needle Rock ACEC/Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) protects a geologic landform with high-value scientific, scenic, and interpretive characteristics. The isolated structure is the igneous core or plug of a tertiary volcano, formed when magma hardened within the vent.

**General Description:** This 80-acre site was designated as the Needle Rock ONA/ACEC in the 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP. The spectacular volcanic formation rises almost 1,000 feet above the Smith Fork River Valley. The structure formed in the Miocene when intruding magma hardened to form a plug (also known as a neck). Over millions of years, the surrounding sedimentary rock eroded, leaving behind the resistant igneous core. The 80-acre site is managed to protect scientific and scenic qualities that are vulnerable to damage from human use.

**Values Assessed**

- Natural System: *Rare Geological Feature*
- Scenic

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 1 and 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

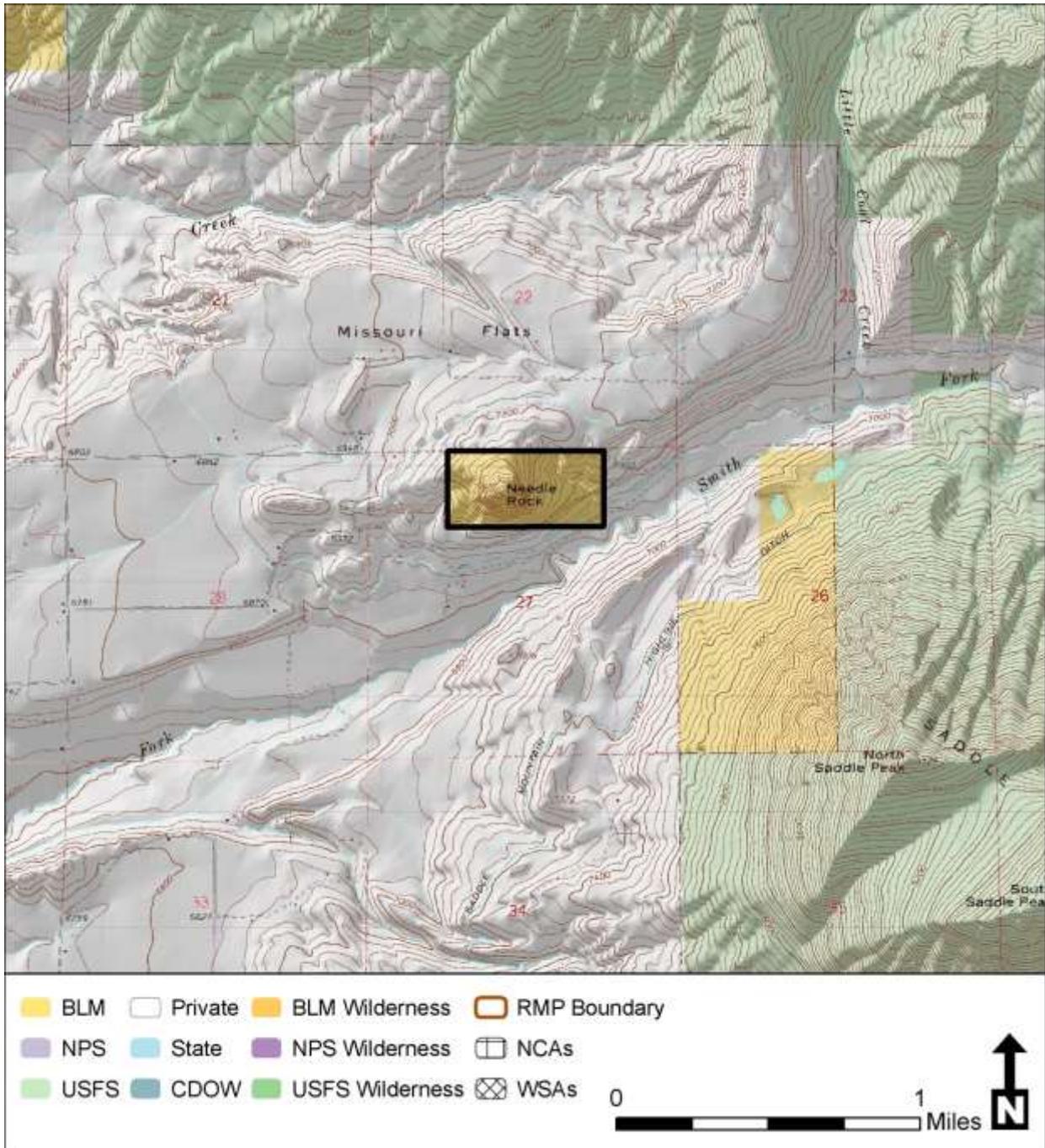
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The ACEC is within a Scenic Quality Class A area, and the volcanic neck is an iconic symbol for the North Fork of the Gunnison region.
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Needle Rock is an outstanding example of a regionally rare volcanic neck.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The site is a tourist attraction of high regional interest.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The volcanic neck is an exemplary geologic feature vulnerable to damage from human use.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The area was designated as a BLM Instant Study Area prior to FLPMA and was listed by the Colorado Natural Areas Program in October 1992 as a unique or high-quality natural feature of statewide significance.

# ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

## ACEC Map I - Needle Rock ACEC/ONA (Existing) 80 acres



## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

### 2. ADOBE BADLANDS ACEC/ONA (Existing)

---

**Status:** Existing

**General Location:** In Delta County, Colorado approximately three miles northwest of the town of Delta.

**Acreage:** 6,380

**Significance:** The Adobe Badlands ACEC and ONA is managed to protect unique scenic qualities, improve threatened and endangered species habitat, and reduce active erosion.

**General Description:** The 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP designated the area as the Adobe Badlands ONA/ACEC. Wind and water have shaped the Mancos Shale hills and flats into a highly scenic landscape. Fragile area soils are susceptible to high rates of erosion, resulting in heavy sediment loads and saline runoff.

The area provides occupied and potential habitat for the threatened Colorado hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus glaucus*). In addition, the area provides habitat for the BLM Sensitive white-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys leucurus*) and possibly for the BLM Sensitive kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis*).

**Values Assessed**

- Botanical: *Federally Threatened Species*
- Wildlife: *BLM Sensitive Species*
- Scenic
- Natural Process: *Highly Erodible Soils*

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	The area is not significantly different from other Mancos Shale sites.
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species biodiversity).	Yes	The BLM Sensitive white-tailed prairie dog ( <i>Cynomys leucurus</i> ) inhabits the area and potentially the BLM Sensitive kit fox ( <i>Vulpes macrotis</i> ).

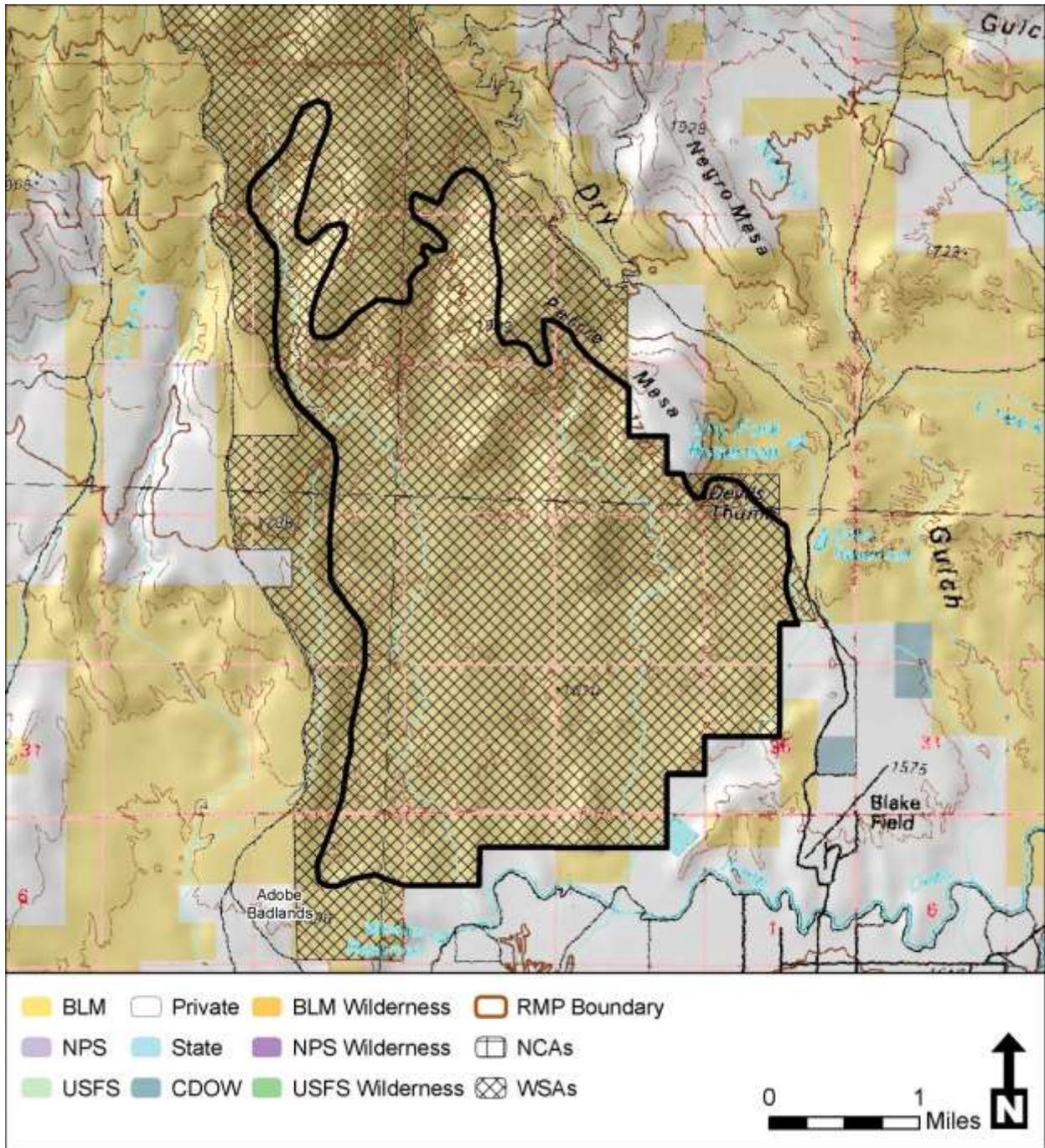
## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Colorado hookless cactus ( <i>Sclerocactus glaucus</i> ) occurs in the area and is federally classified as a threatened species.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The Adobe Badlands is identified in numerous state and regional hiking guide books due to its highly scenic qualities.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The Adobe Badlands is within an adobe roadless area that is susceptible to adverse change from high rates of erosion and human impacts without special management. Nearby private lands present the potential for impacts from illegal off-road recreation, dumping, and other damaging uses.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The area was designated as an ACEC in the 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP and is within a WSA designated in 1992.

# ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

## ACEC Map 2 - Adobe Badlands ACEC/ONA (Existing) 6,380 acres



### 3. SALT DESERT SHRUB ECOSYSTEM ACEC/RNA (Proposed)

---

**Status:** Proposed

**Proponent:** BLM (includes the CNHP Wells Gulch PCA) and external proponents

**General Location:** Delta County, Colorado northwest of the town of Delta, north and east of highway 50, and south of the Grand Mesa National Forest.

**Acres:** 34,540 (including 6,380 from the existing Adobe Badlands ONA/ACEC)

**Significance:** The proposed ACEC contains a core population of threatened Colorado hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus glaucus*), locally imperiled cold desert shrubland communities, and the BLM Sensitive white-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys leucurus*) and burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). This ecosystem is easily disturbed and difficult to restore.

**General Description:** This broad, gently sloping shrub/grassland covers a large area east of the Gunnison River in western Delta County. The existing Adobe Badlands ACEC lies within part of the proposed ACEC. Vegetation in much of the area is characterized by shadscale with galleta grass, except on north facing slopes where the dominant grass is salina wildrye. The area also has two occurrences of globally vulnerable to globally secure (G3/G5) and locally imperiled (G3/S2) cold desert shrubland communities.

The area contains populations of the threatened Colorado hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus glaucus*), considered globally and locally vulnerable (G3/S3) by CNHP, as well as the BLM Sensitive white-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys leucurus*) and burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). The area provides suitable habitat for and may support populations of the BLM Sensitive kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis*), considered globally secure but locally critically imperiled (G4/S1) and the ferruginous hawk (*Buteo Regalis*), considered locally vulnerable (G4/S3B).

The Intermountain Indian breadroot (*Pediomelum megalanthum*) occurs over a wide area, usually on the edges of dry washes, but is never abundant in any one place. The hills are free of weeds, except for some cheatgrass. Low-lying swales are dominated by greasewood, along with seablight and winterfat. Low areas tend to be weedier with cheatgrass and halogeton.

The area has a Biodiversity Significance Rank of B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

**Values Assessed**

- Botanical: *Federally Endangered and Threatened Species*
- Fish and Wildlife: *BLM Sensitive Species*

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 2 and 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

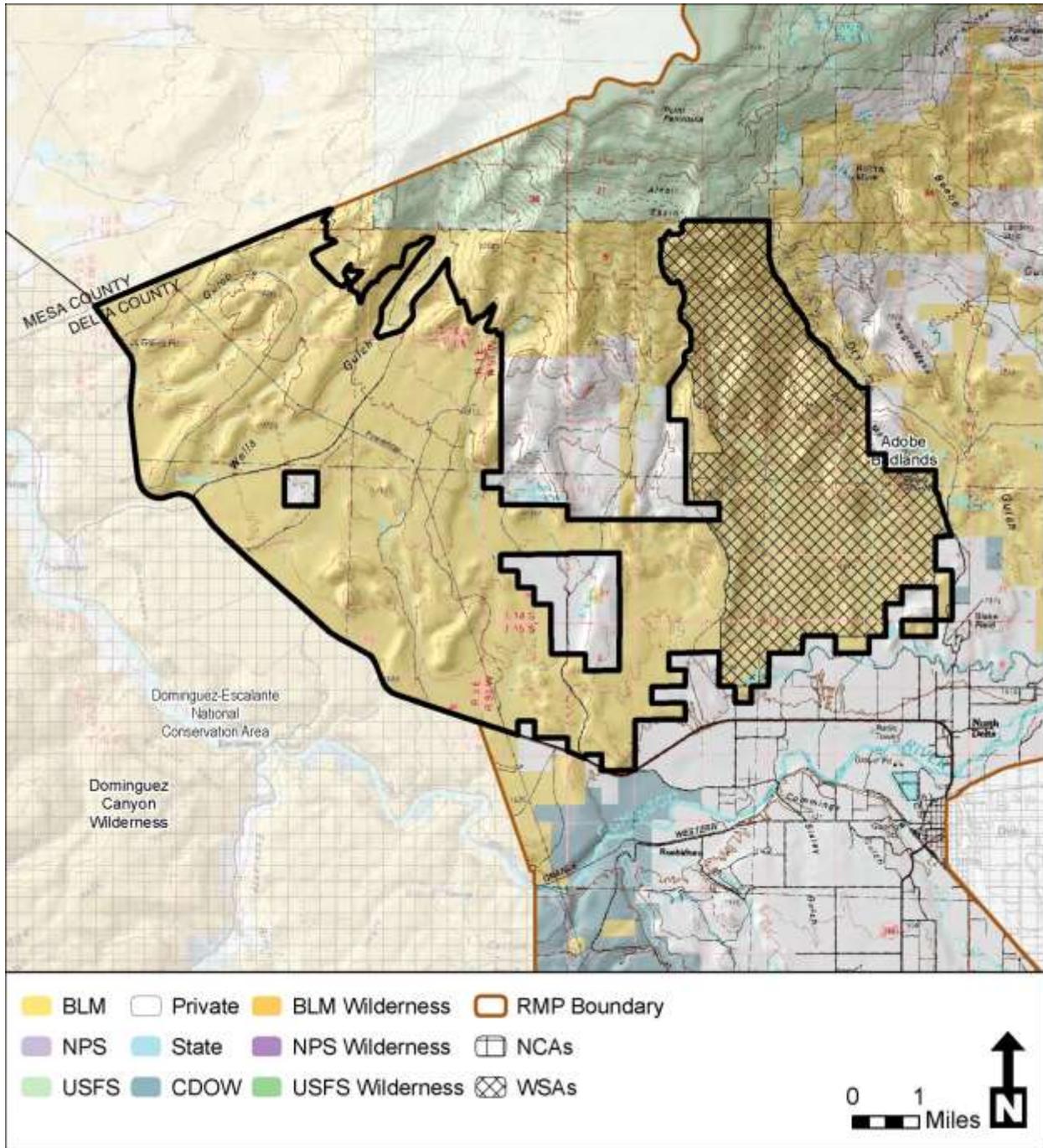
## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The area provides habitat for the BLM Sensitive white-tailed prairie dog, burrowing owl, kit fox, and ferruginous hawk.
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Known populations of the endemic and federally listed Colorado hookless cactus are concentrated in this area. The salt desert shrubland ecosystem is easily disturbed and difficult to restore. CNHP considers salt desert shrubland in the area to be globally vulnerable and locally imperiled (G3/S2).

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	Area contains adobe soils within a selenium program management area and significant populations of the endemic and federally-listed threatened Colorado hookless cactus.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The salt desert shrubland is ranked as globally vulnerable and locally imperiled (G3/S2). Multiple examples demonstrate that recovery from disturbance activities in this area is difficult. Multiple sensitive species are known or have potential to be in the area.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Biodiversity Significance Rank of B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance.

# ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

## ACEC Map 3 - Salt Desert Shrub Ecosystem (Proposed) 34,540 acres



## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

### 4. FAIRVIEW SOUTH ACEC/RNA (Existing)

---

**Status:** Existing

**General Location:** Approximately four miles southeast of Montrose, Colorado and 3.5 miles east of highway 550.

**Acreage:** 210

**Significance:** The Fairview South ACEC and Research Natural Area (RNA) contains a significant portion of one of the largest populations of federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*).

**Description:** Originally designated in the 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP, the Fairview RNA/ACEC consists of two tracts. The north tract was redesignated in the 2004 Gunnison Gorge NCA RMP and is not addressed here. The 210-acre south tract (referred to as Fairview South) is the subject of this evaluation.

Fairview South contains a large population of clay-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*). This species is endemic to the Adobe badlands of Montrose and Delta counties, with the known range restricted to less than 35 square miles. Fairview South also contains native plant communities representative of the sparsely vegetated adobe badlands, as well as a population of globally vulnerable adobe beardtongue (*Penstemon retrorsus*).

**Values Assessed**

- Botanical: *Endangered and BLM Sensitive Species*

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

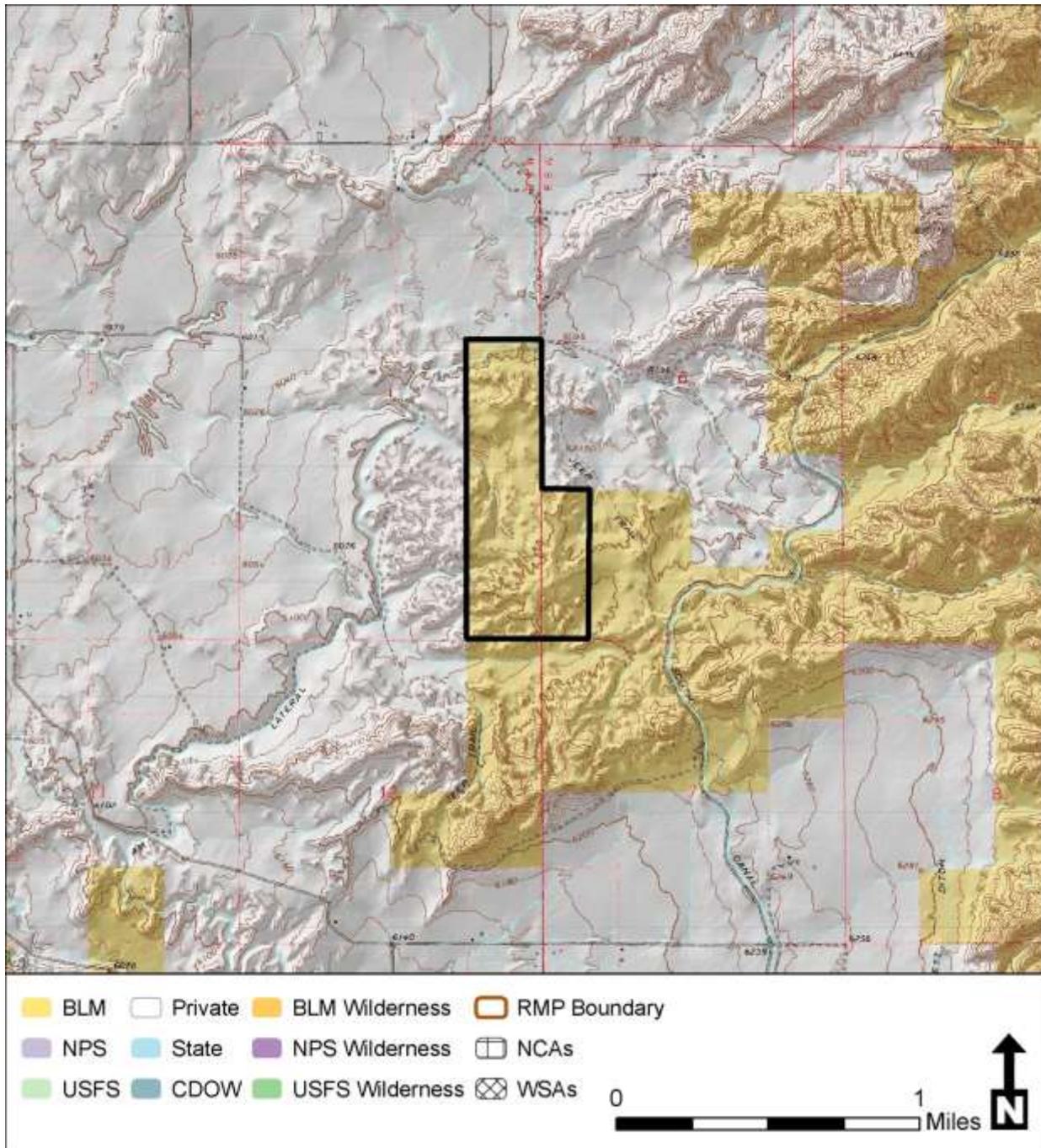
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area contains populations of federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area contains a significant portion of one of the largest populations of federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat (ranked by CNHP as a G1/S1 species).
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Endangered clay-loving buckwheat is vulnerable to adverse change.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The area is an existing ACEC within a recommended CNHP PCA.  The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently evaluating the area for potential designation as Critical Habitat for clay-loving wild buckwheat.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

### ACEC Map 4 - Fairview South ACEC/RNA (Existing) 210 acres



## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

### 5. FAIRVIEW SOUTH ACEC/RNA (Proposed Expansion I)

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**Status:** Existing ACEC with proposed expansion

**Proponent:** BLM

**General Location:** Approximately four miles southeast of Montrose, Colorado, 3.5 miles east of Highway 550, and west of South Canal.

**Acreage:** 610

**Significance:** The expanded Fairview South ACEC and Research Natural Area (RNA) contains a significant portion of one of the largest populations of federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*) and a good (B-ranked) occurrence of globally vulnerable (G3/S3) adobe beardtongue (*Penstemon retrorsus*). The area provides habitat for the white-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys leucurus*), identified as a BLM Sensitive species.

**Description:** Originally designated in the 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP, the Fairview RNA/ACEC consists of two tracts. The north tract was redesignated in the 2004 Gunnison Gorge NCA RMP and is not addressed in this report, while the 210-acre south tract (referred to as Fairview South) is included in this proposal. Since designation, additional dense populations of clay-loving wild buckwheat have been discovered to the south and east of this tract. In addition, increasing pressures from development are impacting this species on BLM-administered and private lands. Much of the potential suitable habitat for clay-loving wild buckwheat is located on private lands and has either been developed or may be developed in the future. The area has a Biodiversity Significance Rank of B2 (Very High Biodiversity Significance).

This site has gentle to steep adobe hills, derived from Mancos Shale. The South Canal and an adjacent service road delineate the east boundary of the proposed ACEC. A portion of the BLM land has been designated a Research Natural Area. Vegetation consists of desert shrub communities, with greasewood in bottom lands and shadscale and mat saltbush on hillsides. Plants commonly found in association with the buckwheat and beardtongue include black sagebrush, woody aster, Gardner saltbush, and bottlebrush squirreltail.

#### Values Assessed

- Botanical: *Federally Endangered and BLM Sensitive Species*
- Fish and Wildlife: *Federal Candidate Species*

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 2 and 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

RELEVANCE CRITERION	YES/	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
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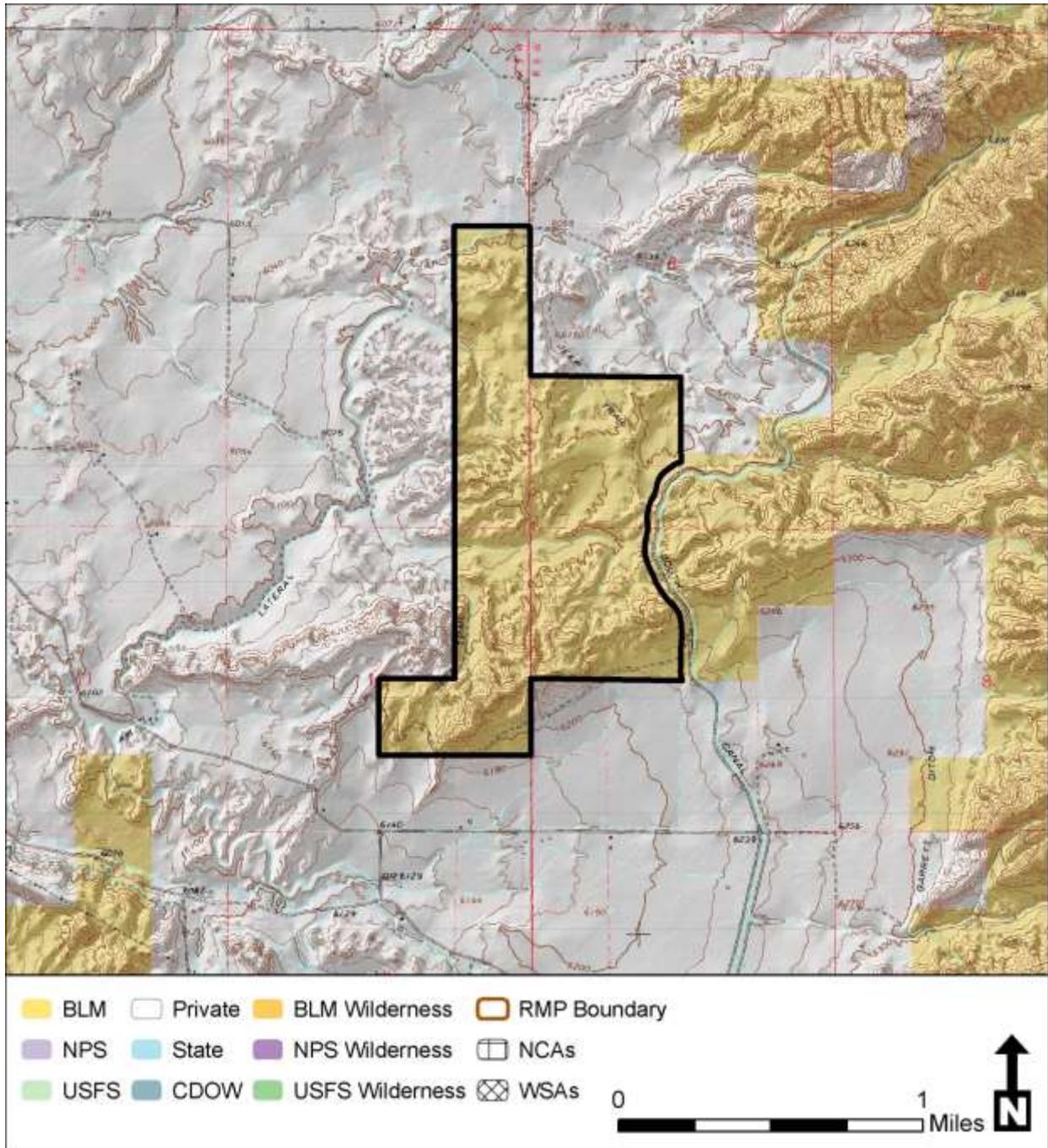
## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

#	DESCRIPTION	NO	
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species biodiversity).	Yes	The area provides habitat for the white-tailed prairie dog (a BLM Sensitive species petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act).
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Populations of federally- endangered clay-loving wild buckwheat include areas of seedling generation (which is a rare occurrence). The area also supports a good (B-ranked) occurrence of adobe beardtongue, ranked by CNHP as globally vulnerable (G3/S3).

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area contains adobe soils and significant populations of endemic and federally listed endangered clay-loving wild buckwheat.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Populations of endangered clay-loving wild buckwheat are endemic to the area, with the highest densities in the proposed additions. Threats to the buckwheat have been identified as stemming from development.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	A portion of the proposed area is within the existing Fairview ACEC. Threats to clay-loving buckwheat are predominantly due to urban development. Much of the historic habitat in the area has been or may be developed. Habitat for the species is becoming restricted to predominantly BLM lands in the UFO.  The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently evaluating the area for potential designation as Critical Habitat for clay-loving wild buckwheat.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

### ACEC Map 5 - Fairview South ACEC/RNA (Proposed Expansion I) 610 acres



## 6. FAIRVIEW SOUTH ACEC/RNA (Proposed Expansion II)

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**Status:** Existing with proposed expansion

**Proponent:** CNHP, Western Slope Environmental Resource Council, Western Colorado Congress, Craig Grother.

**General Location:** Approximately four to eight miles southeast of Montrose, Colorado both east and west of the South Canal.

**Acreage:** 4,250

**Significance:** The existing Fairview ACEC and RNA contains a significant portion of one of the largest populations of federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*).

The Dry Cedar Creek area supports occurrences of federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*), BLM Sensitive and globally imperiled (G2G3/S2S3) Colorado desert parsley (*Lomatium concinnum*), as well as adobe beardtongue (*Penstemon retrorsus*) and good-neighbor bladderpod (*Lesquerella vicina*), both of which are ranked as globally vulnerable (G3/S3).

The South Canal area contains an excellent occurrence of federally endangered clay-loving wild buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*) and globally vulnerable adobe beardtongue (*Penstemon retrorsus*). The area also provides habitat for the BLM Sensitive white-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys leucurus*).

**Description:** Originally designated in the 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP, the Fairview RNA/ACEC consists of two tracts. The north tract was redesignated in the 2004 Gunnison Gorge NCA RMP and is not addressed in this report, while the 210-acre south tract (referred to as Fairview South) is included in this proposal. Since designation, additional dense populations of clay-loving wild buckwheat have been discovered to the south of this tract. In addition, increasing pressures from development are impacting this species on BLM-administered and private lands. Much of the potential suitable habitat for clay-loving wild buckwheat is located on private lands and has either been developed or may be developed in the future. The area has a Biodiversity Significance Rank of B2 (Very High Biodiversity Significance).

*From the CNHP PCA descriptions for Dry Cedar Creek and South Canal areas:*

### Dry Cedar Creek

The Dry Cedar Creek area is the southern part of the Uncompahgre Badlands, consisting of adobe hills derived from Mancos Shale. The area is mostly BLM land and is fragmented by roads, canals, and powerlines. In addition to an occurrence of the federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*), the site contains excellent (A-ranked) and good (B-ranked) occurrences of BLM Sensitive Colorado desert parsley (*Lomatium*

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

*concinnum*), which is classified by CNHP as globally imperiled (G2G3/S2S3), and as well as excellent (A-ranked) and fair (C-ranked) occurrences of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) adobe beardtongue (*Penstemon retrorsus*) and an unranked occurrence of the globally imperiled (G2/S2) good-neighbor bladderpod (*Lesquerella vicina*).

### South Canal

The South Canal area has gentle to steep adobe hills derived from Mancos Shale. The South Canal, along with an adjacent service road, runs through the site. The area has a mix of private and BLM ownership. This site contains an excellent occurrence of the federally endangered clay-loving wild buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*) and a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) adobe beardtongue (*Penstemon retrorsus*). Additional vegetation consists of desert shrub communities, with greasewood in the bottoms and shadscale and mat saltbush on hillsides.

#### Values Assessed:

- Botanical: *Federally Endangered and Candidate Species and BLM Sensitive Species*
- Fish and Wildlife: *Federal Candidate Species*

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 2 and 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

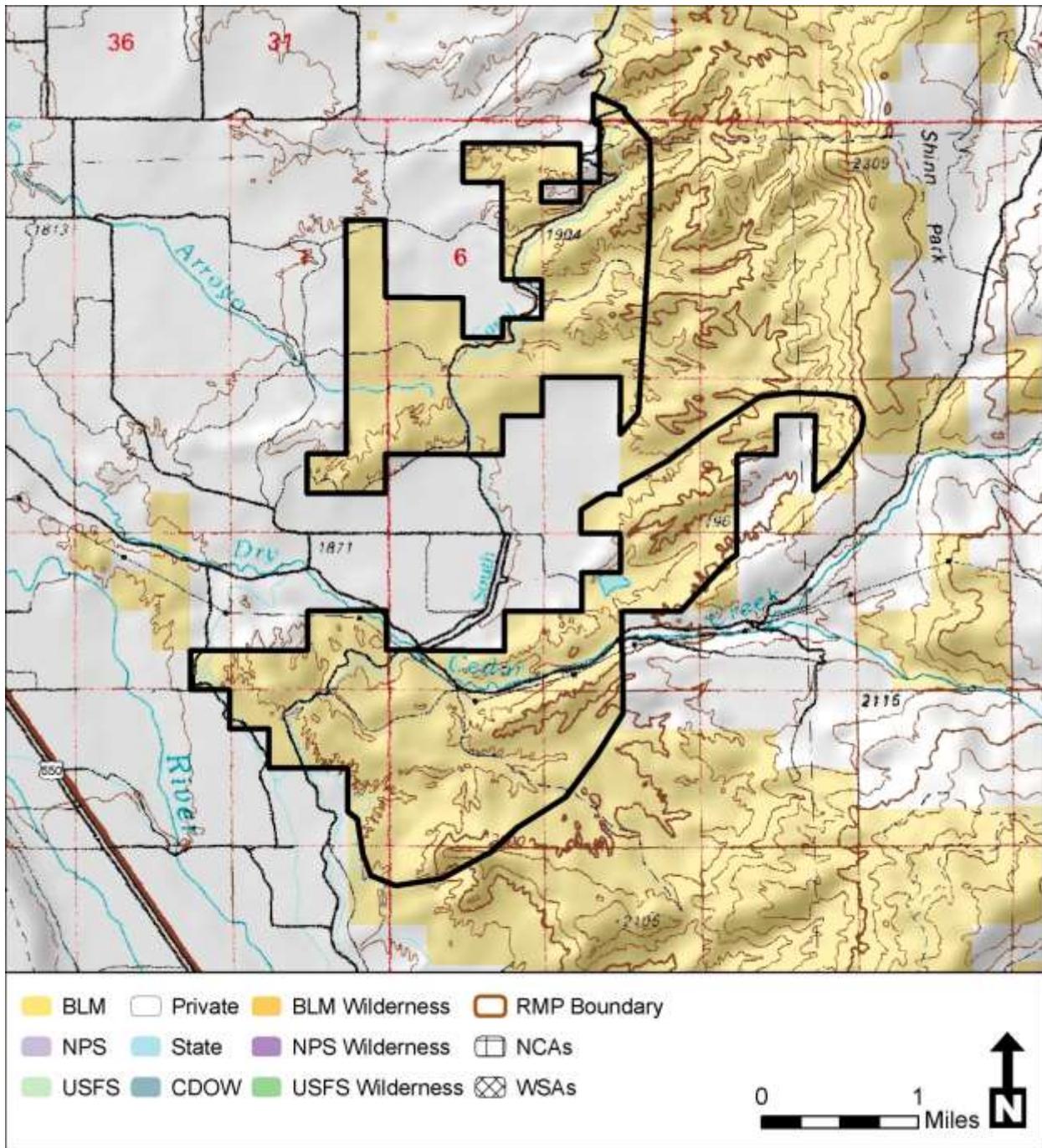
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species biodiversity).	Yes	The area contains white-tailed prairie dog habitat (a BLM Sensitive species petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act).
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area supports populations of endangered clay-loving wild buckwheat, including areas of seedling generation (which is a rare occurrence). The area also has occurrences of Colorado desert Parsley (a BLM Sensitive species).

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area contains adobe soils and supports endemic plant species and significant populations of federally endangered clay-loving wild buckwheat.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Endangered clay-loving wild buckwheat is endemic to the area. The highest density areas of buckwheat occur in the proposed additions. Threats to the buckwheat have been identified as stemming from development.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	A portion of the proposed area is in an existing ACEC. Threats to clay-loving buckwheat are predominantly due to urban development. Much of the historic habitat in the area has been or may be developed. Habitat for the species is becoming restricted to predominantly BLM lands. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently evaluating the area for Critical Habitat designation for clay-loving wild buckwheat.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 6 - Fairview South ACEC/RNA (Proposed Expansion II)  
4,250 acres



## 7. ROUBIDEAU CORRIDORS ACEC (Proposed)

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**Status:** Proposed

**Proponent:** BLM

**General Location:** Approximately ten miles southwest of Delta and eleven miles west of Olathe, Colorado. Includes Roubideau, Monitor, and Potter Creeks and adjacent lands, as well as the Camel Back WSA.

**Acreage:** 8,720

**Significance:** The canyons and streams have very high biodiversity significance, supporting good and excellent examples of narrowleaf cottonwood/skunkbrush riparian forests, montane and lower montane riparian forests with blue spruce, Douglas fir, narrowleaf cottonwood and red-osier dogwood. The riparian areas also have foothills riparian shrublands characterized by river birch and coyote willow. BLM Sensitive species including Grand Junction milkvetch (*Astragalus linifolius*), desert bighorn sheep, and northern leopard frog are found there. The canyons form important movement corridors from the desert and Gunnison River up to the forest on the Uncompahgre Plateau. The uplands afford protection to the integrity of the canyons below, and offer additional habitat for bighorn sheep. A recent fish survey conducted by the BLM indicates that Potter Creek supports, and Monitor Creek is likely to support, viable populations of BLM sensitive species bluehead sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*) and flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*).

**Description:** The Roubideau Corridors ACEC would be a new ACEC, part of which is in the Camel Back WSA. The new ACEC is largely based on the Roubideau Creek Potential Conservation Area recommended by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program. The canyons and streams including and surrounding Roubideau Creek are considered to have very high biodiversity significance by the CNHP. The canyons contain three perennial streams providing available water sources for the bighorn sheep and other wildlife, and also provide important movement corridors from the desert and Gunnison River up to the forest on the Uncompahgre Plateau. These corridors are important for wildlife, and were important for early settlers as well. Several historic structures are found along Roubideau Creek.

### **Values Assessed**

- Botanical: *Riparian Vegetation and BLM Sensitive Species*
- Fish and Wildlife: *Aquatic and BLM Sensitive Species*
- Historical: *Early settlement*

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The area has historic cabins. There is also historic human and livestock passage from the desert to the high country. Scenic values: VRI Class 2
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The area supports a herd of BLM Sensitive desert bighorn sheep, the BLM Sensitive northern leopard frog and peregrine falcon, wildlife movement corridors, and golden eagle nests. The area also supports viable populations of BLM sensitive species bluehead sucker ( <i>Catostomus discobolus</i> ) and flannelmouth sucker ( <i>Catostomus latipinnis</i> ).
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Intact Riparian systems and high quality riparian vegetation are along the creeks. The hydrologic systems are largely intact. Largely roadless, the habitat is not fragmented. Adjacent to the Forest Service congressionally designated "Area," which is managed as wilderness.

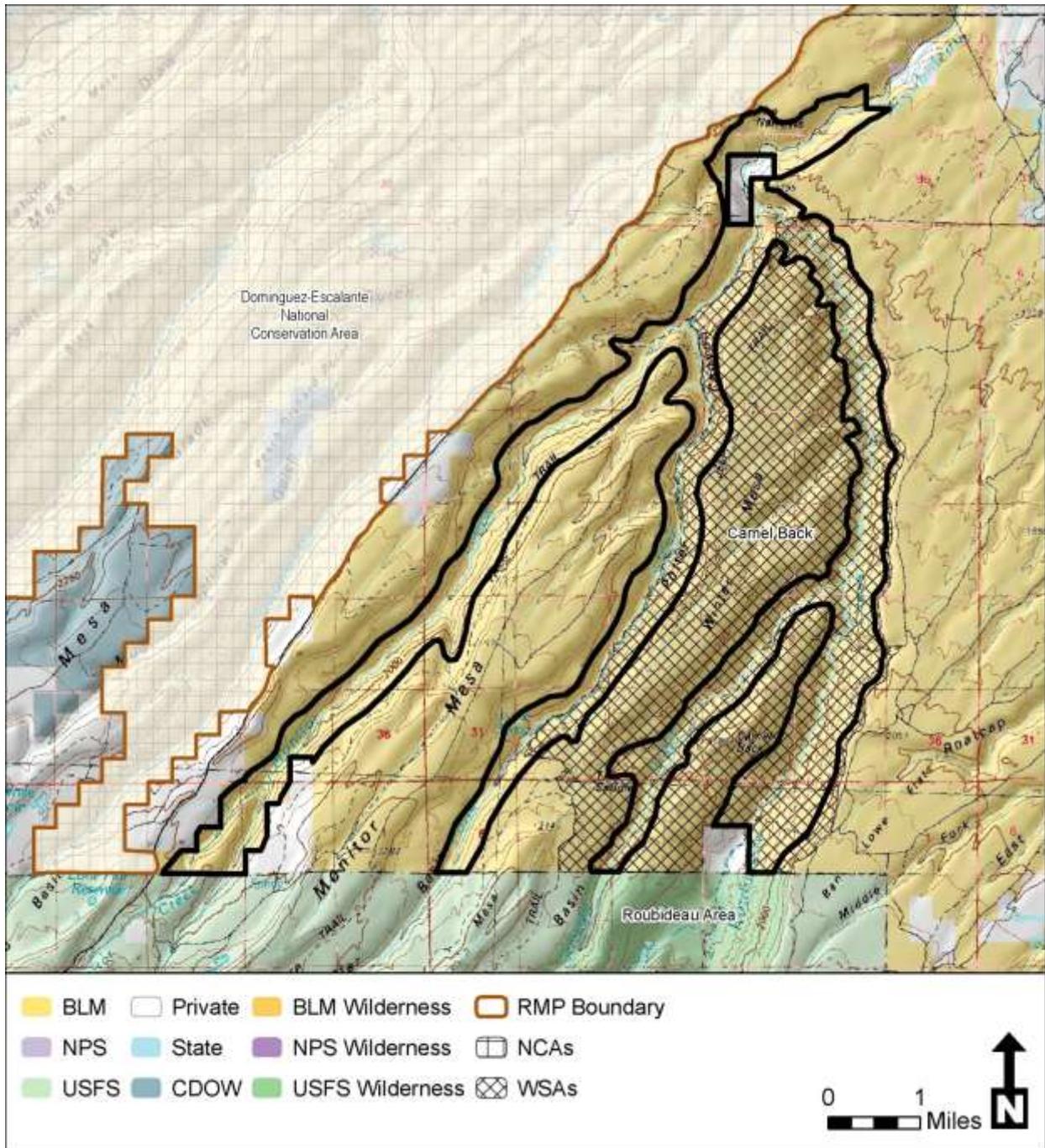
IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The riparian vegetation has a CNHP rating of B2 for very high biodiversity (statewide and global significance).

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	<p>The riparian areas have good and excellent examples of native riparian communities with overall global rarity.</p> <p>The creeks support viable populations of BLM sensitive species bluehead sucker (<i>Catostomus discobolus</i>) and flannelmouth sucker (<i>Catostomus latipinnis</i>).</p> <p>The area also has cultural and historic sites which are vulnerable to change.</p>
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	<p>About one-half of the proposed ACEC is within a WSA.</p> <p>The area contains globally significant riparian areas, as well as eligible historic/cultural sites.</p>

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 7 - Roubideau Corridors ACEC (Proposed)  
8,720 acres



## 8. ROUBIDEAU-POTTER-MONITOR ACEC (Proposed)

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**Status:** Proposed

**Proponent:** Jim Riddell

**General Location:** Approximately ten miles southwest of Delta, CO, and eleven miles west of Olathe, CO. Area includes Roubideau and Potter creeks, as well as lands between and adjacent to the creeks.

**Acreage:** 20,470

**Significance:** The canyons and streams have very high biodiversity significance, supporting good and excellent examples of narrowleaf cottonwood/skunkbrush riparian forests, montane and lower montane riparian forests with blue spruce, Douglas fir, narrowleaf cottonwood and red-osier dogwood. The canyons also have foothill riparian shrublands characterized by river birch and coyote willow. BLM Sensitive species including Grand Junction milkvetch (*Astragalus linifolius*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*), and northern leopard frog (*Rana pipiens*) are found there. A recent fish survey conducted by the BLM indicates that Potter Creek supports, and Monitor Creek is likely to support, viable populations of BLM sensitive species bluehead sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*) and flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*). The canyons form important movement corridors from the desert and Gunnison River up to the forest on the Uncompahgre Plateau. The uplands afford protection to the integrity of the canyons below, as well as offer spectacular views down into the canyons and to mountains and mesas in the distance. There are many archaeological and historical sites in the area, including wickiups, petroglyphs, and historic structures.

**Description:** The Roubideau-Potter-Monitor ACEC would be a new ACEC encompassing all of the Camel Back WSA. The new ACEC contains the Roubideau Creek Potential Conservation Area recommended by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program. The canyons and streams including and surrounding Roubideau Creek are considered to have very high biodiversity significance by the CNHP. The canyons contain three perennial streams providing an available water source for the bighorn sheep and other wildlife, and also form important movement corridors from the desert and Gunnison River up to the forest on the Uncompahgre Plateau. These corridors are important for wildlife, and were important for early settlers as well. Several historic structures are found along Roubideau Creek. With a depth of 750 to 1,000 feet from the rim to the creeks, the area is geographically configured to offer a sense of isolation for wildlife and human visitors.

While some of this area already enjoys special protection through the Wilderness Study Area designation, the three canyons (Roubideau, Potter, and Monitor) offer equally valuable biological resources and wildness, and together form a single canyon system of three branches. The road along Potter Creek initially constrained the boundary of the Camel Back WSA; the road was closed to motorized and mechanized travel at the request of

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

DOW soon after the formation of the WSA to protect migration corridors for bighorn sheep in Potter and Monitor Canyons. The road has remained closed for two decades.

Archeological and historical sites abound in this area, including a rare collection of thirteen Ute wikipups, as well as petroglyphs perhaps 6,000 years old and an historic inscription in Roubideau Canyon that may date back to the time of the American Revolution, as well as sheep herder cabins and structures more than 100 years old.

### Values Assessed

- Botanical: *Riparian Vegetation and BLM Sensitive Species*
- Fish and Wildlife: *Aquatic and BLM Sensitive Species*
- Historical: *Early Settlement*

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

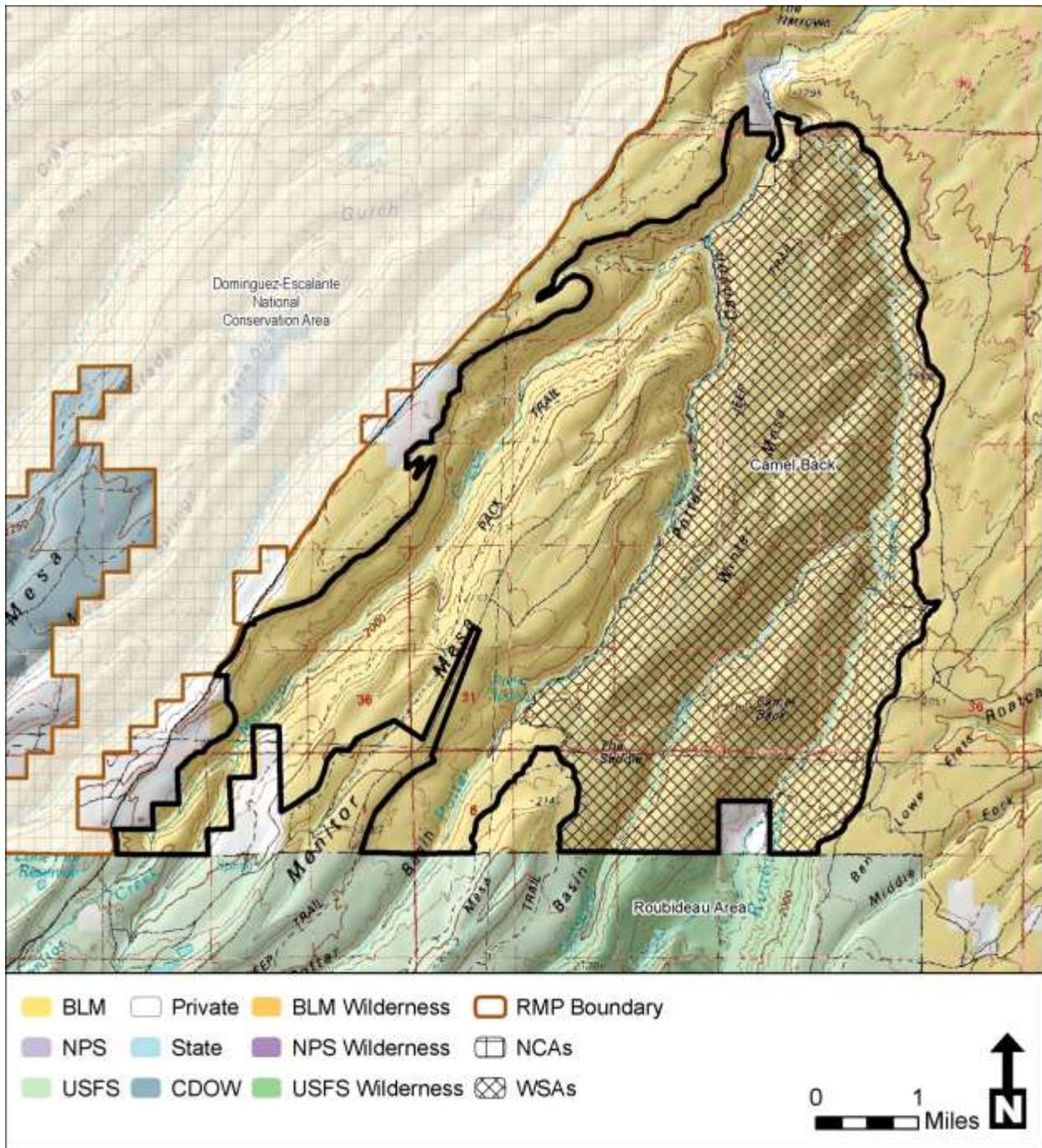
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The area has historic cabins. There is also historic human and livestock passage from the desert to the high country. Scenic values: VRI Class 2.
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	Area provides wildlife movement corridors and habitat for BLM Sensitive desert bighorn sheep, northern leopard frogs, and peregrine falcons. Golden eagle nests also occur in the area. The area also supports viable populations of BLM sensitive species bluehead sucker ( <i>Catostomus discobolus</i> ) and flannelmouth sucker ( <i>Catostomus latipinnis</i> ).
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Intact riparian systems and high quality riparian vegetation occur along the creeks. The hydrologic systems are largely intact.  The area is predominantly roadless and the habitat is not substantially fragmented. The area is adjacent to a Forest Service congressionally designated "area" managed as wilderness.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	Area riparian vegetation has a CNHP rating of B2 for very high biodiversity (statewide and global significance).
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	<p>Area vegetation provides good and excellent examples of native riparian communities with overall global significance.</p> <p>The creeks support viable populations of BLM sensitive species bluehead sucker (<i>Catostomus discobolus</i>) and flannelmouth sucker (<i>Catostomus latipinnis</i>).</p> <p>The area contains cultural and historic sites that are vulnerable to adverse change.</p>
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The Camel Back WSA is within the proposed ACEC. The ACEC contains globally significant riparian areas, as well as eligible historic/cultural sites.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 8 - Roubideau-Potter-Monitor ACEC (Proposed)  
20,470 acres



**ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS**

**9. LOWER UNCOMPAGHGRE PLATEAU CULTURAL ACEC (Proposed)**

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**Status:** Proposed

**Proponent:** WSERC, WCC

**General Location:** East side of Uncompahgre Plateau, from about Dry Creek to the east side of the Camel Back WSA.

**Acreage:** 31,870

**Significance:** The proposed ACEC contains important rock art and archaeological sites from three different transitional time periods of occupation not represented elsewhere. The area was a central part of the early homeland of the Ute Indians, and has numerous traditional cultural and sacred sites of interest to modern Utes. The archaeological sites are nationally significant.

**Description:** The proposed ACEC is on the east side of the Uncompahgre Plateau within a predominately pinyon-juniper plant community, and includes sagebrush parks and riparian areas. The area has numerous scattered significant archaeological sites that include Archaic to historic Ute occupation dating to the 1880s (including the Harris site, rock art sites, and wickiups).

**Values Assessed**

- Cultural

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 1

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1 and 2

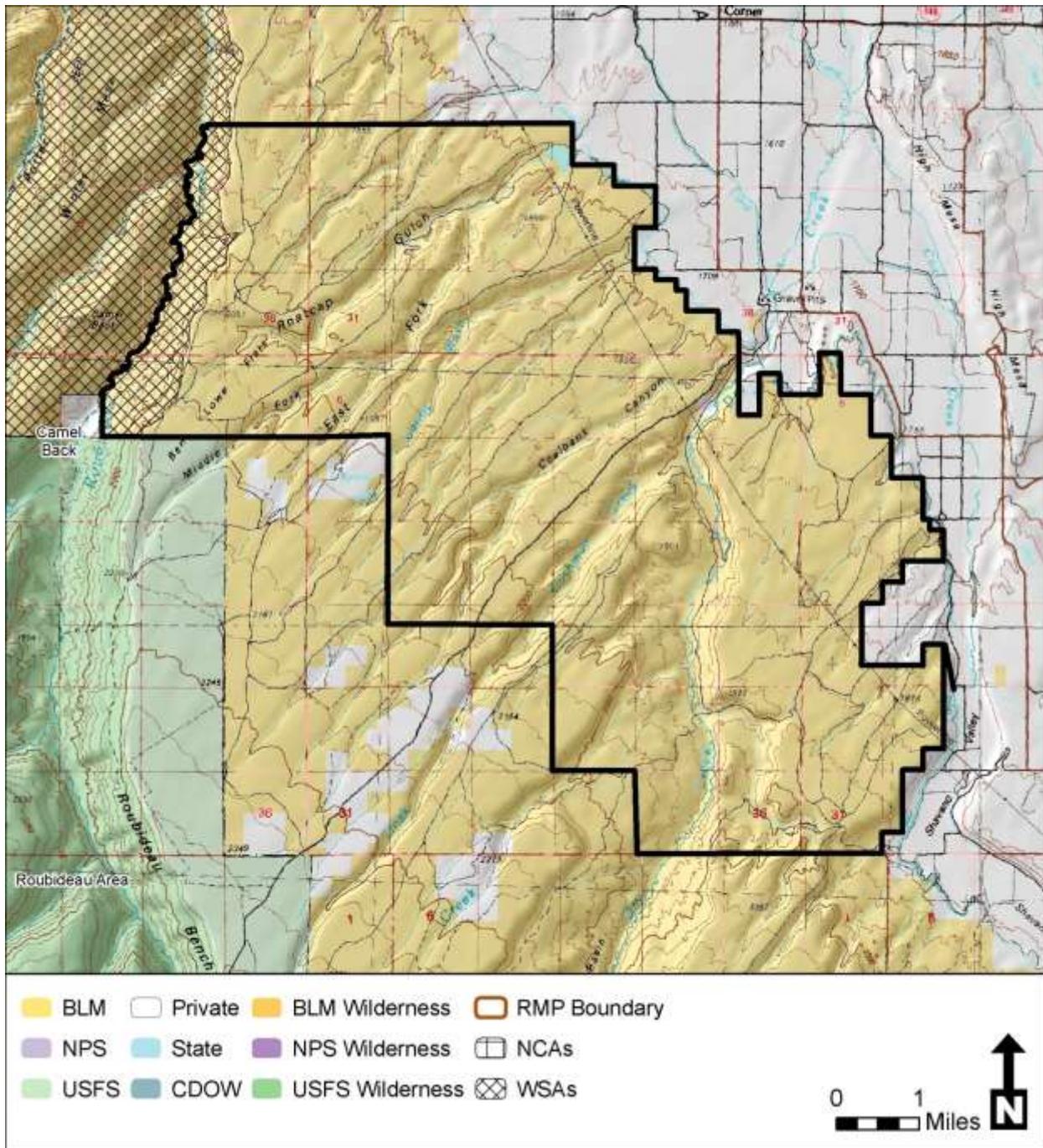
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	Three different transitional time periods of occupation not represented elsewhere.

**ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS**

<b>IMPORTANCE CRITERION</b>		<b>YES/ NO</b>	<b>RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The archaeological sites are nationally significant.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The archaeological sites are irreplaceable if damaged.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

### ACEC Map 9 - Lower Uncompahgre Plateau Cultural ACEC (Proposed) 31,870 acres



## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

### 10. SAN MIGUEL RIVER ACEC (*Existing*)

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**Status:** Existing

**General Location:** San Miguel River and adjacent lands, from approximately Placerville, CO to Horsefly Creek, including Saltado Creek and Beaver Creek.

**Acreage:** 22,780

**Significance:** The ACEC preserves the high quality riparian vegetation resources, habitat for many bird species, and the scenic value of the corridor.

**Description:** The San Miguel River ACEC was designated through amendment of the San Juan/San Miguel RMP in 1993. It protects high quality native riparian communities that are mainly due to the undammed San Miguel River and its intact hydrology. Such communities are becoming increasingly rare in Colorado.

The ACEC has been designated as an Important Bird Area by Audubon Society. This site represents the finest protected Southwest Canyon Riparian Habitat (SWCR) in the United States (with the exception of Arizona’s San Pedro SWCR), and it provides breeding sites for a wide variety of species and primary migratory routes for nearly all of the West’s songbirds. More than 300 bird species have been observed at the site. The expanding black phoebe population, which has been moving up the San Miguel River, reached the lower end of the ACEC in 1999. The river also has yellow-billed cuckoo habitat.

The Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway runs along the river. The ACEC is a VRI Class 2.

**Values Assessed**

- Botanical: *Riparian Vegetation*
- Wildlife: *Important Bird Area*
- Scenic

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The ACEC has high (VRI Class 2) scenic values. The Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway runs along the river.

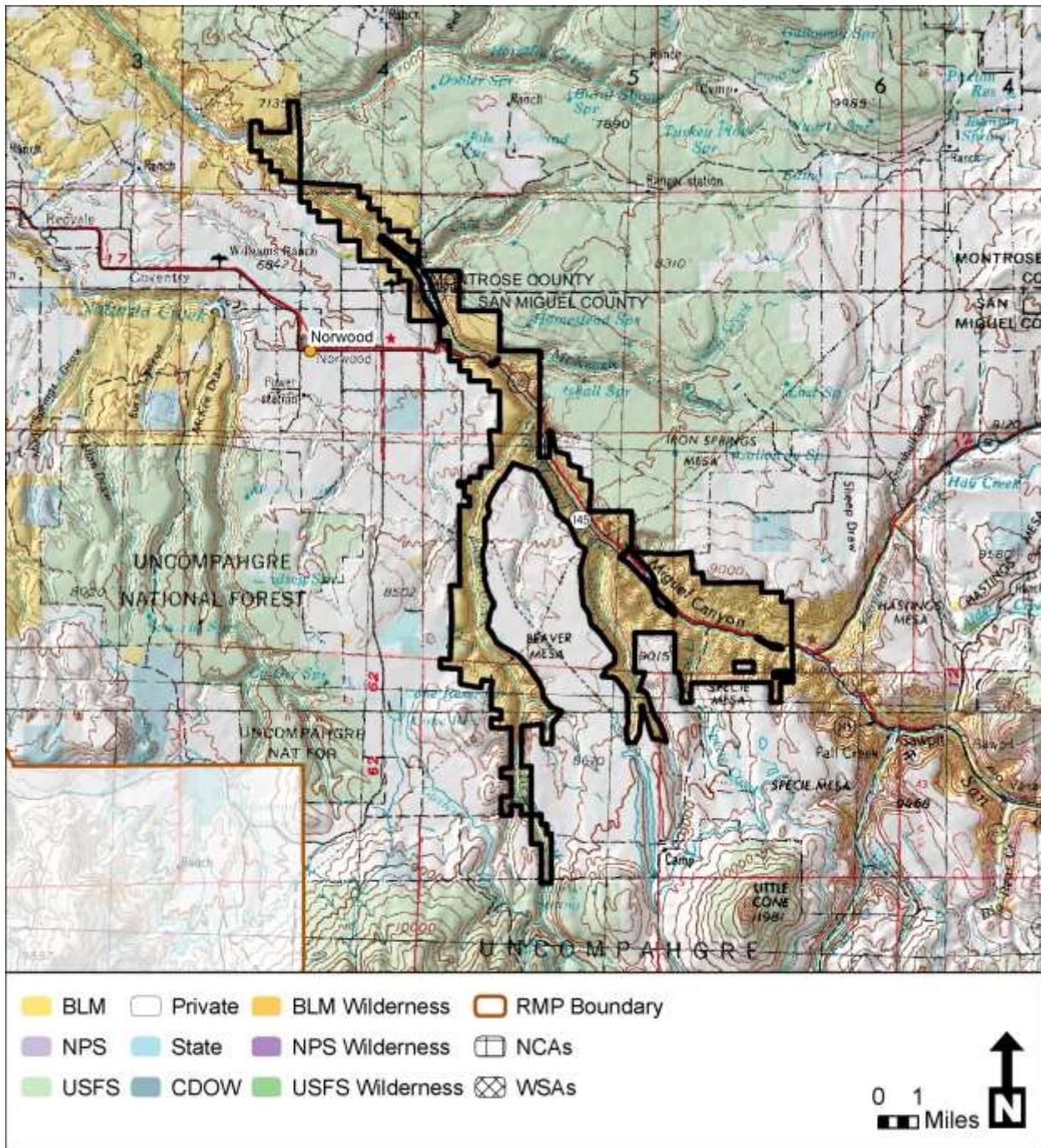
## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The area is designated an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society and provides habitat for the yellow-billed cuckoo (a federal candidate and BLM Sensitive species) habitat and a black phoebe (rare) population.
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	There are exemplary and highly diverse riparian communities supported by the naturally functioning San Miguel River.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The riparian vegetation communities have high biodiversity significance on a global level.  The area is designated as an Important Bird Area with national significance.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The area supports exemplary and extensive riparian communities, now rare in Colorado (since dams control most rivers). Vulnerable to invasive weeds that threaten native ecosystems.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The area is an existing ACEC. High priority riparian area. One of two free-flowing (undammed) rivers in Colorado. The Nature Conservancy has designated the area as an endangered landscape.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 10 - San Miguel River ACEC (Existing)  
22,780 acres



## ***II. SAN MIGUEL RIVER ACEC (Proposed Expansion)***

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**Status:** Existing with proposed addition

**Proponent:** BLM, Trout Unlimited

**General Location:** San Miguel River and adjacent lands, from approximately Deep Creek to the powerline about one-half mile upstream of Montrose County Rd 90, including Saltado Creek, Beaver Creek, and a portion of Leopard Creek.

**Acreage:** 35,420

**Significance:** The ACEC preserves the high quality riparian vegetation resources, habitat for many bird species, and the scenic value of the corridor.

**Description:** The San Miguel River ACEC is an existing ACEC. It was designated through amendment of the San Miguel RMP in 1993. It protects high quality native riparian communities that are mainly due to the undammed San Miguel River and its intact hydrology. Such communities are becoming increasingly rare in Colorado.

The proposed expansion would extend protection to additional areas that have been recognized by the BLM and the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) as having high biodiversity significance. The CNHP has proposed the San Miguel River at Cottonwood Creek as a Potential Conservation Area which hosts skunkbrush/coyote willow riparian shrubland, narrowleaf cottonwood/skunkbrush riparian woodland, and coyote willow/mesic graminoid riparian shrubland, all of which are good to excellent examples of these community types.

The original ACEC has been designated as an Important Bird Area by Audubon Society. This site represents the finest protected Southwest Canyon Riparian Habitat (SWCR) in the United States, with the exception of Arizona's San Pedro SWCR. It provides breeding sites for a wide variety of species and primary migratory routes for nearly all of the West's songbirds. More than 300 bird species have been observed at the site. The expanding black phoebe population, which has been moving up the San Miguel River, reached the lower end of the original ACEC in 1999.

The Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway follows the river downstream from Placerville. The San Juan Skyway is follows the river upstream from Placerville. The potential ACEC is a VRI Class 2 rating.

### **Values Assessed**

- Botanical: *Riparian Vegetation*
- Wildlife: *Important Bird Area*
- Scenic

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The ACEC has scenic values, with a VRI Class 2 rating. The UnawEEP Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway follows the river downstream from Placerville, while the San Juan Skyway follows the river upstream from Placerville.
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The Audubon Society has designated the area as an Important Bird Area. The area provides a Canada lynx (threatened species) movement corridor and habitat for Colorado River cut-throat trout (a BLM Sensitive species), yellow billed cuckoo (Candidate and BLM Sensitive species), and a population of rare black phoebes.
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	There are exemplary and highly diverse riparian communities supported by the naturally functioning San Miguel River. An important wetland area is also in the proposed ACEC.

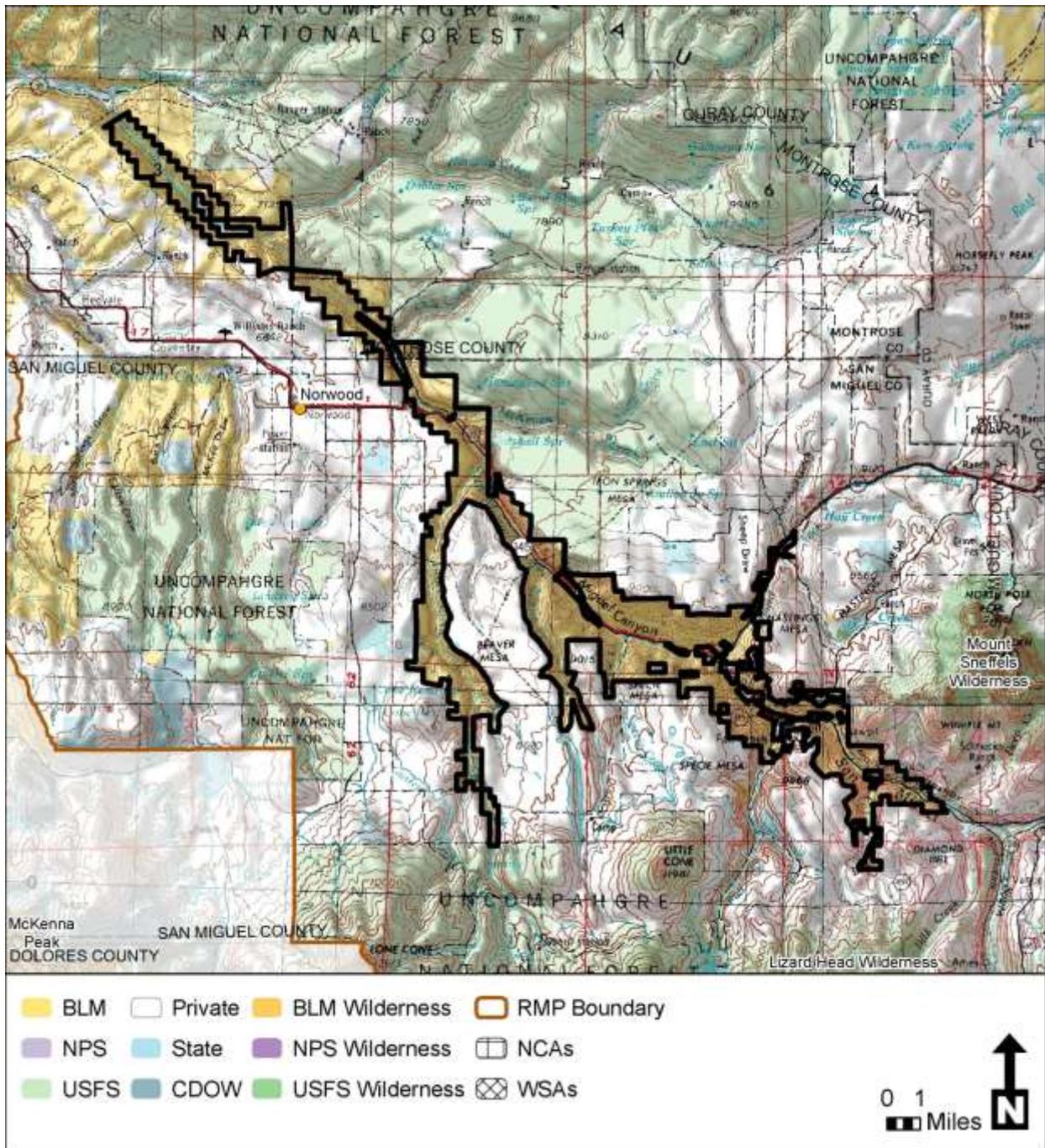
IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	High biodiversity significance at a global level, and a designated Important Bird Area of national importance. Part of national and state scenic and historic byway system.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Exemplary and extensive riparian communities, now rare in Colorado with dams controlling most rivers. Vulnerable to invasive species that threaten native ecosystems. High water quality in the area.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The existing ACEC needs some expansion to extend protection to additional significant riparian communities.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map II - San Miguel River ACEC (Proposed Expansion)  
35,420 acres



## 12. SAN MIGUEL GUNNISON SAGE GROUSE ACEC (Proposed)

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**Status:** Proposed

**Proponent:** San Miguel County, WSERC, WCC

**General Location:** Scattered parcels of BLM lands beginning about seven miles southeast of, and about nine miles southwest of, Norwood, CO.

**Acreage:** 470

**Significance:** The proposed ACEC contains potential, occupied, and historic Gunnison sage grouse (GUSG) habitat in San Miguel County.

**Description:** The proposed ACEC is located on several small parcels of BLM land containing potential, historic, and occupied GUSG habitat, as defined by Colorado Division of Wildlife. This area also contains proposed critical habitat (460 acres) for Gunnison sage-grouse, as designated by USFWS. It should be noted that determining the historic range of GUSG is problematic for many reasons, most notably because of widespread loss of sagebrush habitats, which preceded scientific study of the species. Additionally, GUSG have been extirpated from many areas for which no useful zoological records or specimens exist (!).

GUSG currently occur in what have previously been considered eight widely scattered and isolated populations in Colorado and Utah. In Colorado, seven GUSG population areas are: Cerro Summit-Cimarron-Sims Mesa, Crawford, Dove Creek, Gunnison Basin, Piñon Mesa, Poncha Pass, and San Miguel Basin. The San Miguel Basin population exhibits a patchy distribution of GUSG. As a result, there are six separate “subpopulations” identified within San Miguel Basin: Dry Creek Basin; Hamilton Mesa; Miramonte Reservoir; Gurley Reservoir; Beaver Mesa; and Iron Springs.<sup>2</sup> This proposed ACEC area incorporates the northern end of what is considered part of the San Miguel (Miramonte Reservoir) population of GUSG. The core of this population is found on the Dolores Field Office to the south, but small portions of occupied habitat exist in this proposed ACEC. Historically, Dove Creek-Monticello, San Miguel, Crawford, and Piñon Mesa all had much more sagebrush habitat and probably larger GUSG populations that were somewhat connected through more contiguous areas of sagebrush habitat. An estimated 20% loss of sagebrush habitat between the late 1950s and the early 1990s and fragmentation of sagebrush habitat in southwestern

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<sup>1</sup> Pg 32 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

<sup>2</sup> Pg 36-37 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

Colorado is thought to have led to the current isolation of these populations.<sup>3</sup> The protection of the small BLM portions of occupied habitat adjacent to private, state and Forest Service lands being managed for GUSG, provide additional protection for the species.

### Values Assessed

- Wildlife Resource: *Habitat for BLM Sensitive Species*

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 2

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 2 and 3

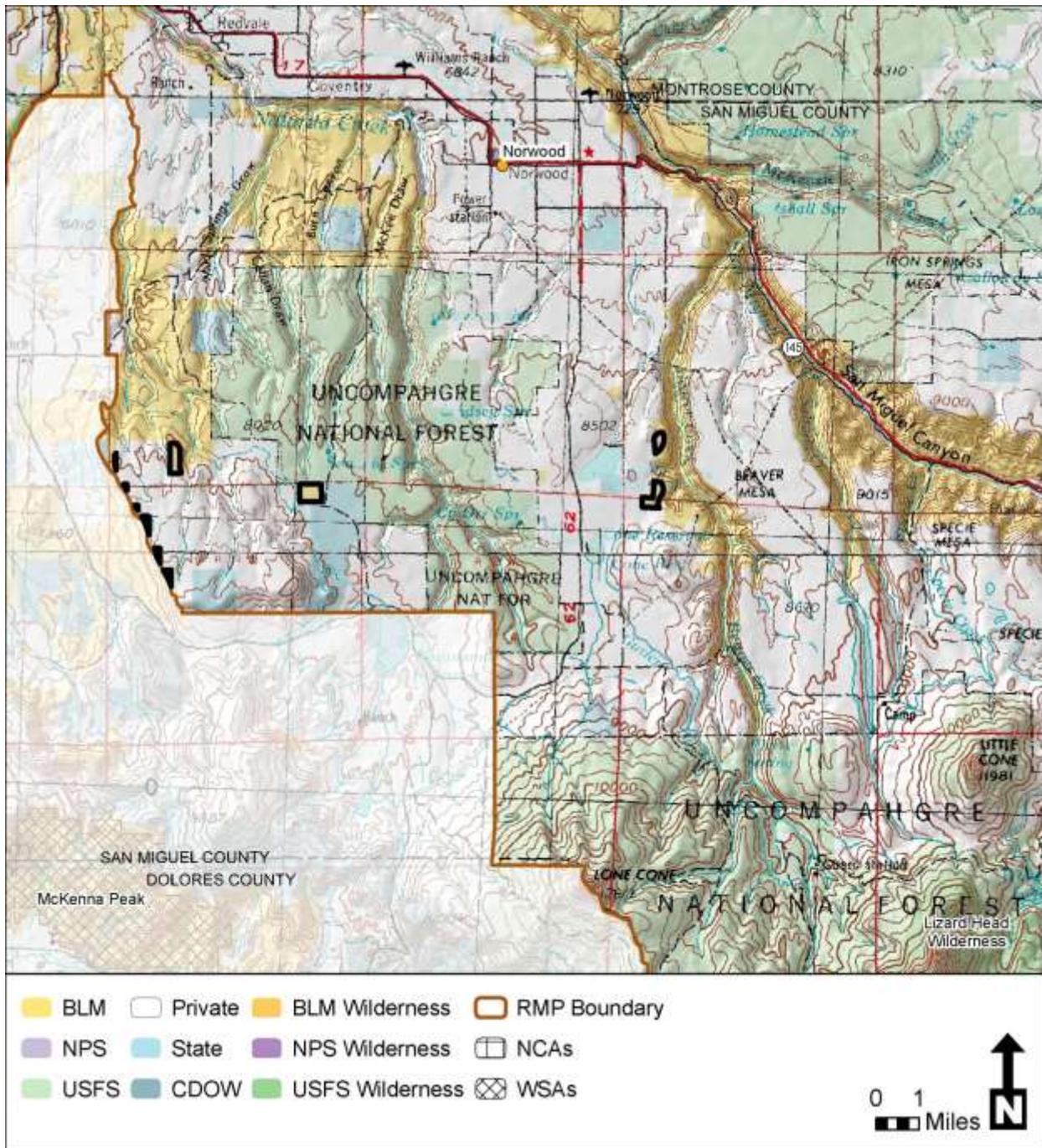
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	Much of the historic and occupied habitat and leks are on private and state lands in the area. Concentrated nesting and brood rearing habitat exist on BLM lands in limited small areas near Miramonte Reservoir.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Locations of this potential ACEC, adjacent to occupied habitats on state forest and private lands where active management is occurring, could be sensitive to change and change could have impacts to populations.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The Gunnison sage grouse is being considered for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act. There is also a great deal of interest locally and statewide in protecting the species.

<sup>3</sup> Pg 51 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 12 - San Miguel Gunnison Sage-Grouse ACEC (Proposed)  
470 acres



## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

### 13. WEST MONTROSE COUNTY GUNNISON SAGE GROUSE ACEC (Proposed)

**Status:** Proposed

**Proponent:** San Miguel County, WSERC, WCC

**General Location:** Western Montrose County, in Paradox Valley, and in areas from northwest of Nucla to south of Naturita, CO.

**Acreage:** 22,930

**Significance:** The proposed ACEC contains historic and potential Gunnison sage grouse (GUSG) habitat in western Montrose County.

**Description:** The proposed ACEC is located on several small parcels of BLM land containing historic GUSG habitat, as defined by Colorado Division of Wildlife. This area also contains a small portion of proposed critical habitat (approx. 290 acres) for Gunnison sage-grouse, as designated by USFWS. It should be noted that determining the historic range of GUSG is problematic for many reasons, most notably because of widespread loss of sagebrush habitats, which preceded scientific study of the species. Additionally, GUSG have been extirpated from many areas for which no useful zoological records or specimens exist (<sup>4</sup>).

GUSG currently occur in what have previously been considered eight widely scattered and isolated populations in Colorado and Utah. In Colorado, seven GUSG population areas are: Cerro Summit-Cimarron-Sims Mesa, Crawford, Dove Creek, Gunnison Basin, Piñon Mesa, Poncha Pass, and San Miguel Basin. The San Miguel Basin population exhibits a patchy distribution of GUSG. As a result, there are six separate “subpopulations” identified within San Miguel Basin: Dry Creek Basin; Hamilton Mesa; Miramonte Reservoir; Gurley Reservoir; Beaver Mesa; and Iron Springs.<sup>5</sup> This proposed ACEC area is the northern end of what is considered part of the San Miguel population of GUSG. The core of this population is found on the Dolores Field Office to the south. Historically, Dove Creek-Monticello, San Miguel, Crawford, and Piñon Mesa all had much more sagebrush habitat and probably larger GUSG populations that were somewhat connected through more contiguous areas of sagebrush habitat. An estimated 20% loss of sagebrush habitat between the late 1950s and the early 1990s and fragmentation of sagebrush habitat in southwestern Colorado is thought to have led to the current isolation of these populations.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Pg 32 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

<sup>5</sup> Pg 36-37 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

<sup>6</sup> Pg 51 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

### Values Assessed

- Wildlife Resource: *Habitat for BLM Sensitive Species*

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 2

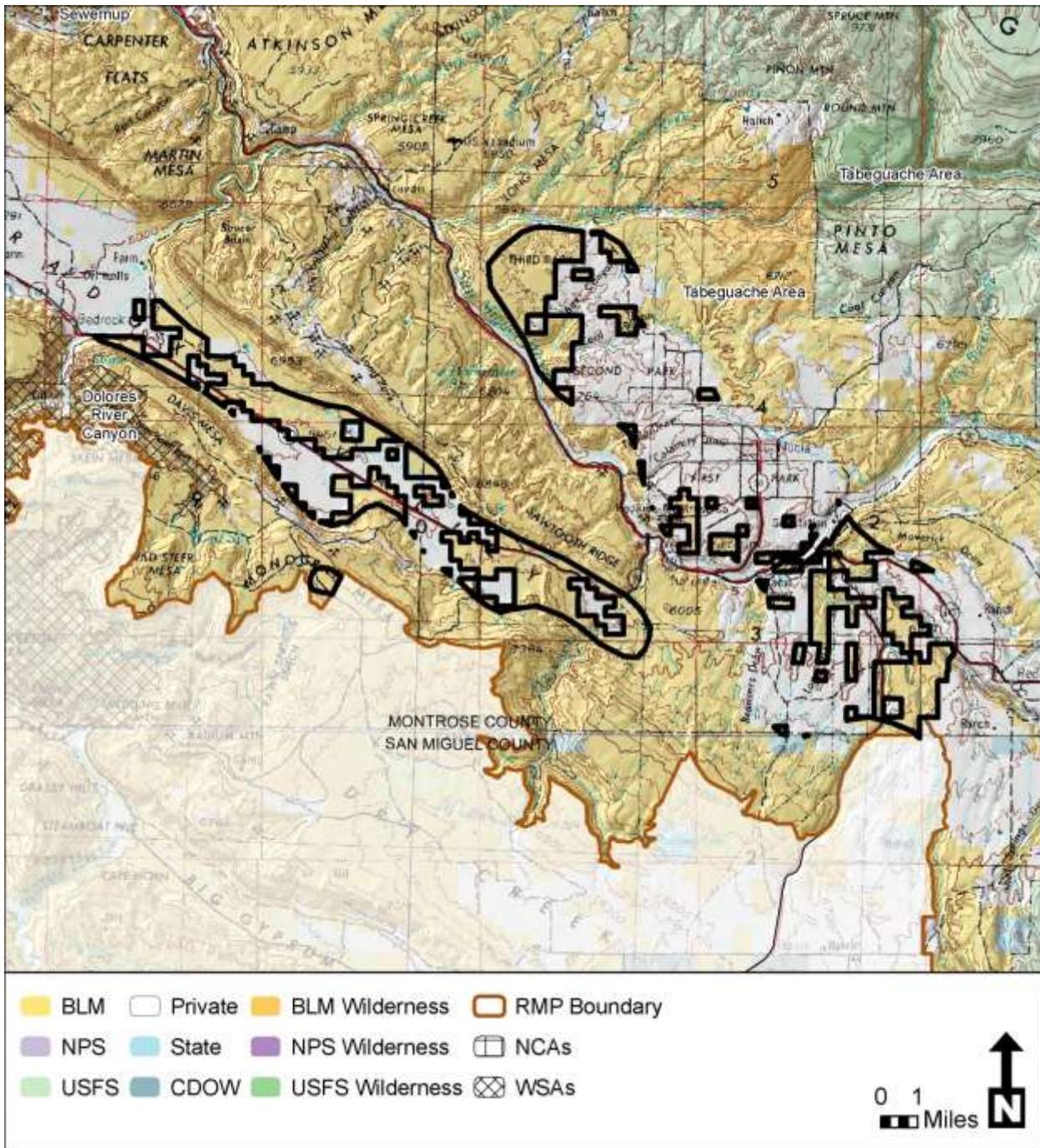
**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	No	Locations in the proposed ACEC contain areas of potential habitat which have not been occupied for greater than 50 years. These particular locations do not meet the relevance criteria.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	No	The habitat is not occupied, and has not been for over 50 years. The area is in the extreme northern portion of habitat for the San Miguel population.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	No	Locations west of Redvale contain areas of potential habitat which has not been occupied for greater than 50 years. Potential habitat in these locations does not meet the importance criteria.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The Gunnison sage grouse is being considered for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act. There is also a great deal of interest locally and statewide in protecting the species.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 13 - West Montrose County Gunnison Sage-Grouse ACEC (Proposed)  
22,930 acres



#### 14. SIMS CERRO GUNNISON SAGE GROUSE ACEC (Proposed)

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**Status:** Proposed

**Proponent:** Art Goodtimes

**General Location:** Approximately five to thirteen miles south of Montrose, CO, east of Spring Creek, and on BLM lands on both sides of Happy Canyon, Dolores Canyon, and Horsefly Canyon; approximately ten to fourteen miles east of Montrose, on both sides of highway 50 near Cerro Summit.

**Acreage:** 25,620

**Significance:** The proposed ACEC contains potential, occupied, and historic Gunnison Sage grouse (GUSG) habitat in Montrose County. This area also contains proposed critical habitat (6,970 acres) for Gunnison sage-grouse, as designated by USFWS. The Sims Mesa lek locations have been periodically occupied by a few grouse as recently as 2002. While no Gunnison sage-grouse have been seen on Sims Mesa leks in many years, Gunnison sage-grouse have been seen in the area in 2011 and 2012. Other lek sites in the area include Coal Hill (6 birds seen in 2004), Hairpin (1 bird seen in 2010), Cimarron (5 birds seen 2009), Cerro (last seen 2000) (Banulis, CDOW pers. comm. 5/27/2010). While no GUSG have been seen on the Cerro lek in recent years, a GUSG was seen in the Cerro Summit area in 2009 (based on personal communication with Ken Holsinger).

**Description:** The proposed ACEC is located on a large parcel of BLM land southeast of Montrose, and on smaller pieces of BLM lands about 10 miles east of Montrose near Cerro Summit. The ACEC contains historic, potential, and occupied GUSG habitat, as defined by Colorado Division of Wildlife.

GUSG currently occur in what have previously been considered eight widely scattered and isolated populations in Colorado and Utah. In Colorado, the seven identified GUSG population areas are: Cerro Summit-Cimarron-Sims Mesa, Crawford, Dove Creek, Gunnison Basin, Piñon Mesa, Poncha Pass, and San Miguel Basin. The Cerro Summit-Cimarron-Sims Mesa population exhibits a patchy distribution of GUSG. As a result, there are two subpopulations identified within Cerro Summit-Cimarron-Sims Mesa: Cerro Summit-Cimarron; and Sims Mesa.<sup>7</sup> This proposed ACEC area includes the BLM lands within the Sims Mesa subpopulation, and a very small portion of the Cerro Summit-Cimarron subpopulation that is within the planning area. An estimated 20% loss of sagebrush habitat between the late 1950s and early 1990s and fragmentation of sagebrush habitat in southwestern Colorado is thought to have led to the current isolation of these

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<sup>7</sup> Pg 36-37 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

populations.<sup>8</sup> The protection of the small BLM portions of occupied/historic habitat provides additional protection for the species.

### Values Assessed

- Wildlife Resource: *Habitat for BLM Sensitive Species*

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 2

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

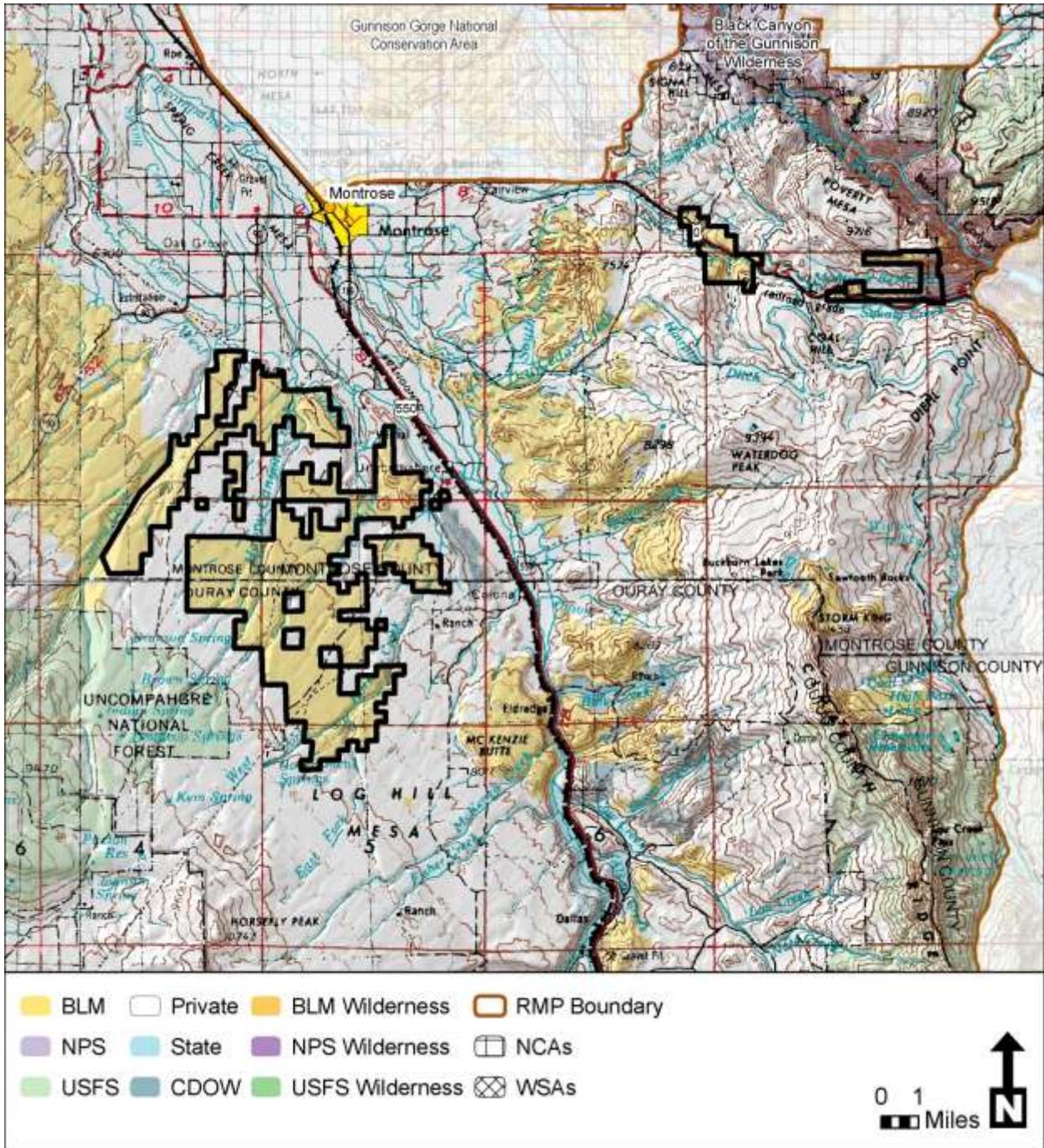
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	These locations have historic, potential, and occupied habitat for the Gunnison sage grouse as defined by CDOW.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	No	The habitat has had only occasional grouse lekking activity in recent years (See the description above).
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Gunnison sage grouse habitat has been fragmented by human uses. Habitat for this GUSG population has become relatively small and isolated from other GUSG populations, and the population is vulnerable to extirpation.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The Gunnison sage grouse is being considered for federal listing as an endangered species. There is also a great deal of interest locally and statewide in protecting the species.

<sup>8</sup> Pg 51 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 14 - Sims Cerro Gunnison Sage-Grouse ACEC (Proposed)  
25,620 acres



### 15. DOLORES RIVER SLICK ROCK CANYON ACEC (Proposed)

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**Status:** Proposed

BLM has submitted two ACEC proposals for the area. The larger one is called “Dolores Slick Rock Canyon” and this smaller proposed area is called “Dolores River Slick Rock Canyon.”

**Proponent:** BLM (includes the CNHP La Sal PCA)

**General Location:** Coyote Wash to approximately Bedrock, CO, within the Dolores River canyon, including La Sal Creek and La Sal Creek canyon.

**Acreage:** 10,670 and 9,780

**Significance:** A spectacular deep canyon with steep cliffs supports high quality riparian vegetation and rare and exemplary riparian communities, hanging gardens, BLM Sensitive plants and fish, desert bighorn sheep, and peregrine falcon. The area also has high scenic quality. An ACEC would help protect these resources.

**Description:** The Dolores River, La Sal Creek, and Coyote Wash have carved a spectacular deep canyon through Jurassic and Triassic sandstones. Steep vertical cliffs dominate the canyonsides, broken only where tributaries enter the canyon.

Major geologic formations in the canyon are Wingate, Kayenta, Navajo, and Entrada sandstones. The Morrison Formation appears near the southern end. Most of this area is roadless and accessible only by raft, canoe, or kayak.

This site includes the riparian zone and adjacent uplands along the Dolores River, from Slick Rock Canyon north to Bedrock. There are excellent to good occurrences of the globally common coyote willow/mesic graminoids (*Salix exigua*/mesic graminoids). Typical vegetation along the river and creeks includes a band of coyote willow, mixed with giant reed at the water's edge between the low and high water marks. La Sal Creek supports a critically imperiled plant association consisting of box elder and river birch. The largest population of the BLM Sensitive (G2/S1) Kachina daisy (*Erigeron kachinensis*) within Colorado occurs along drainages feeding into Coyote wash and canyon.

The canyon bottoms support a nearly continuous occurrence of the riparian plant association known as New Mexico privet foothills riparian shrubland. The site supports two excellent (A-ranked) occurrences of a globally imperiled (G2/S1) New Mexico privet riparian shrub community (*Forestiera pubescens*) along the Dolores River. The New Mexico privet plant community is known only from the major rivers in the Four Corners area.

There are a few hanging garden communities (*Aquilegia micrantha* - *Mimulus eastwoodiae*), imperiled to vulnerable on a global scale (G2G3/S2S3), containing small populations of the globally vulnerable (G3/S1) Eastwood monkeyflower (*Mimulus eastwoodiae*).

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

The proposed ACEC also has a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the Naturita milkvetch (*Astragalus naturitensis*), a BLM Sensitive species and considered to be imperiled to vulnerable both globally and in Colorado (G2G3/S2S3).

Uplands in this area have pinyon-juniper woodlands, sagebrush, or barren sandstone cliffs. Naturita milkvetch was found in the pinyon-juniper community.

Additionally, the Dolores River throughout the length of the site supports populations of roundtail chub (*Gila robusta*), which is a BLM Sensitive species and globally vulnerable (G3/S2). Populations of the chub are at the upstream margin of the species' range and comprise the majority of occurrences for this species. The La Sal Creek tributary harbors exemplary populations of three BLM and Colorado sensitive species: flannelmouth suckers (*Catostomus latipinnis*), bluehead suckers (*Catostomus discobolus*), and roundtail chubs (*Gila robusta*); this is one of a very few spawning tributaries for these species within the Dolores River Basin. Other animal species with conservation significance are desert bighorn sheep and peregrine falcon.

The proposed ACEC also has rock art panels and paleontological sites.

### Values Assessed

- Botanical: *Riparian Communities and BLM Sensitive Species*
- Fish and Wildlife: *BLM Sensitive Species*
- Scenic

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

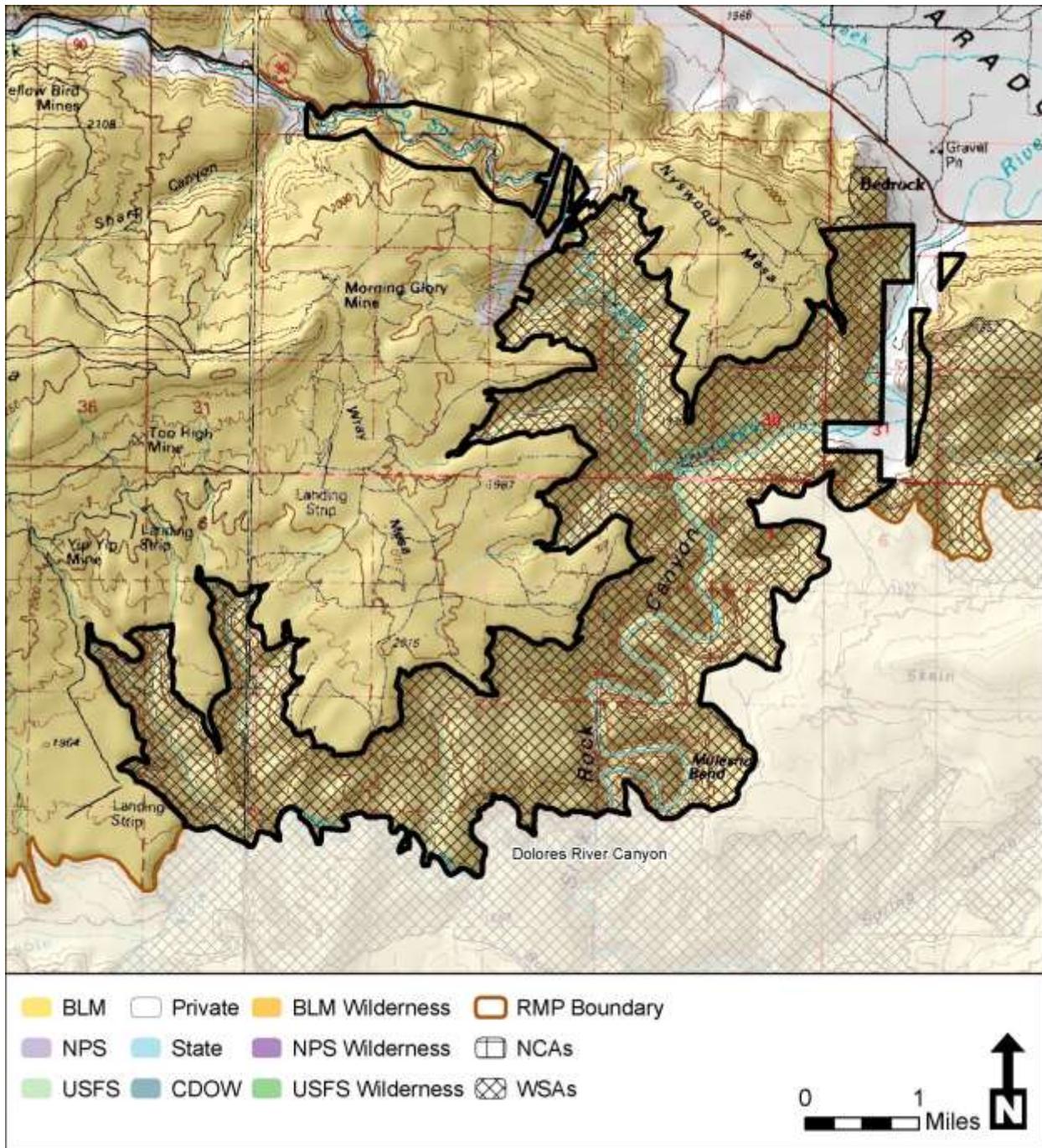
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	BLM has rated the area as VRI Class 2. Cultural sites (rock art panels and historic structures) are in the area, as is a paleontological study area.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	Desert bighorn sheep, peregrine falcon, and Roundtail chub (BLM Sensitive species) inhabit the area. Supports populations of roundtail chub ( <i>Gila robusta</i> ), which is a BLM Sensitive species and globally vulnerable (G3/S2); also populations of three BLM and Colorado sensitive species: flannelmouth suckers ( <i>Catostomus latipinnis</i> ), bluehead suckers ( <i>Catostomus discobolus</i> ), and roundtail chubs ( <i>Gila robusta</i> ).
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Several globally vulnerable and state rare plants are in the proposed ACEC area. The river banks also have box-elder, river birch and red-osier dogwood communities.
IMPORTANCE CRITERION			
#	DESCRIPTION	YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The paleontological resource is of state and national significance. Rare and globally vulnerable plants and plant communities are in the area.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Rock art panels are vulnerable to damage. Vulnerable to invasive species that threaten native ecosystems. Several globally vulnerable and state rare plants are in the proposed ACEC area. Nesting peregrine falcons, a recently delisted species, are sensitive to disturbances. Bighorn sheep are experiencing declines across the region and human-related disturbances and other adverse changes may contribute to these trends.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Within a WSA.

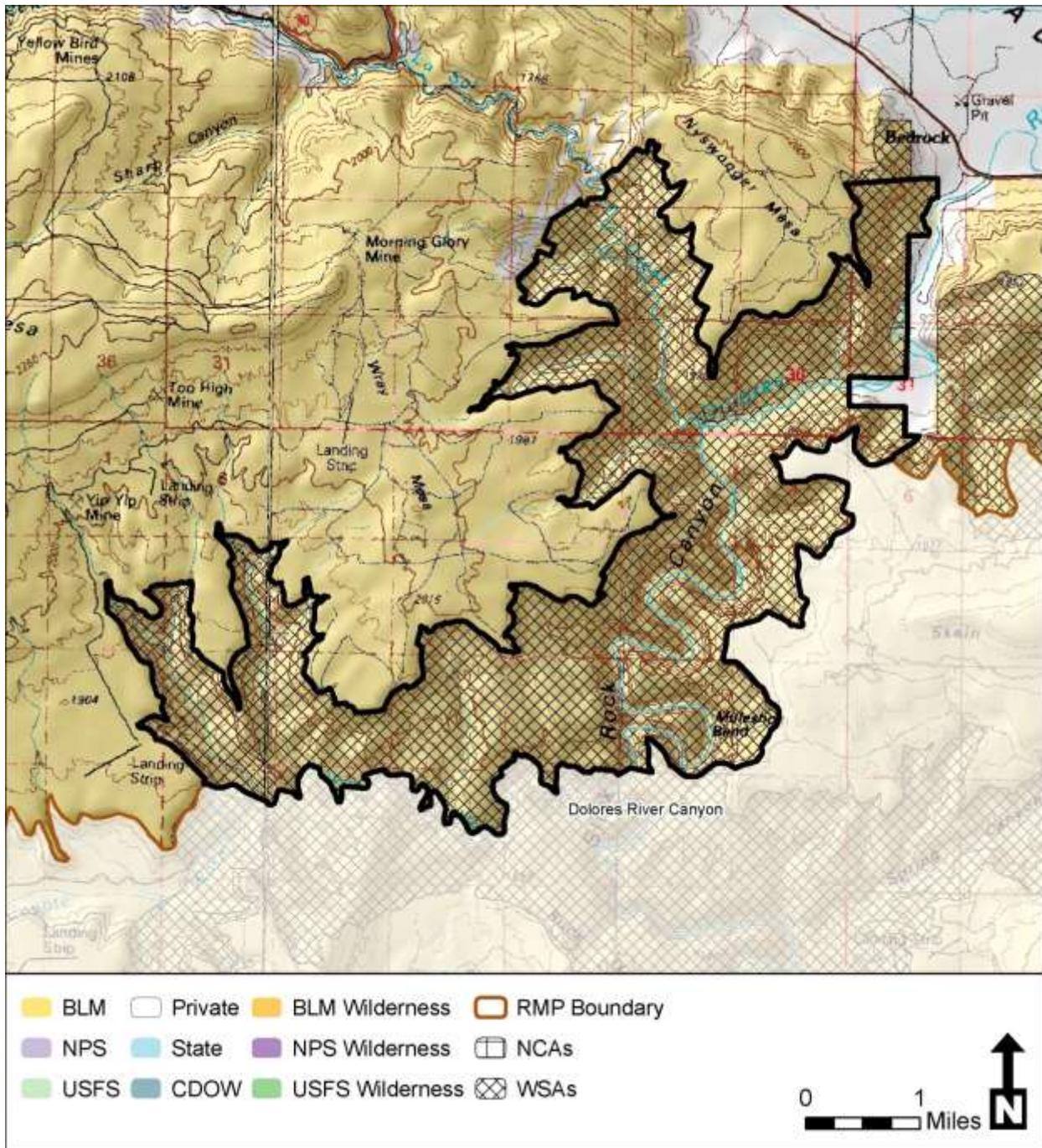
ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 15a - Dolores Slick Rock Canyon ACEC (Proposed)  
10,670 acres



ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 16b - Dolores River Slick Rock Canyon ACEC (Proposed)  
9,780 acres



## 16. LA SAL CREEK ACEC (Proposed)

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**Status:** Proposed

**Proponent:** CNAP

**General Location:** In Montrose County, from the south rim of La Sal Creek to Paradox Valley, and from the east rim of the Dolores River canyon to about Spring Creek.

**Acreage:** 10,500

**Significance:** A spectacular deep canyon supports high quality riparian vegetation and relic riparian communities, BLM Sensitive plants, desert bighorn sheep, and peregrine falcon. Eroding shale slopes on the uplands support populations of rare plants. La Sal Creek harbors exemplary populations of three BLM and Colorado sensitive species: flannelmouth suckers (*Catostomus latipinnis*), bluehead suckers (*Catostomus discobolus*), and roundtail chubs (*Gila robusta*). This is one of a very few spawning tributaries for these species within the Dolores River Basin. The area also has high scenic quality.

**Description:** La Sal Creek cuts a spectacular canyon of entrenched meanders through red Triassic and Jurassic sandstones and siltstones. The narrow floodplain supports a critically imperiled plant association consisting of box elder and river birch. In the narrow band of riparian vegetation, box elder accounts for as much as 70% cover, with river birch providing 25 to 60% cover. Only a few other small occurrences of this community are known.

New Mexico privet, coyote willow, red-osier dogwood, giant reed, and wild rose are also common. Although there are some introduced pasture grasses, including Kentucky bluegrass, there is no tamarisk along the upper part of the creek.

Eroding shale slopes support populations of rare plants: Paradox breadroot (*Pediomelum aromaticum*), a G3/S2 BLM Sensitive Species; and Paradox Valley lupine (*Lupinus crassus*), a G2/S2, BLM Sensitive Species.

Upland vegetation consists of pinyon-juniper woodland with dwarf and true mountain mahogany, cliffrose, Gambel oak, yucca, cacti, and rabbitbrush. A good-sized population of Paradox breadroot, with several hundred plants, was found on a dry bench overlooking La Sal Creek.

### **Values Assessed**

- Botanical: *Unique Vegetation Communities and BLM Sensitive Species*
- Fish and Wildlife: *BLM Sensitive Species*

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 2 and 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

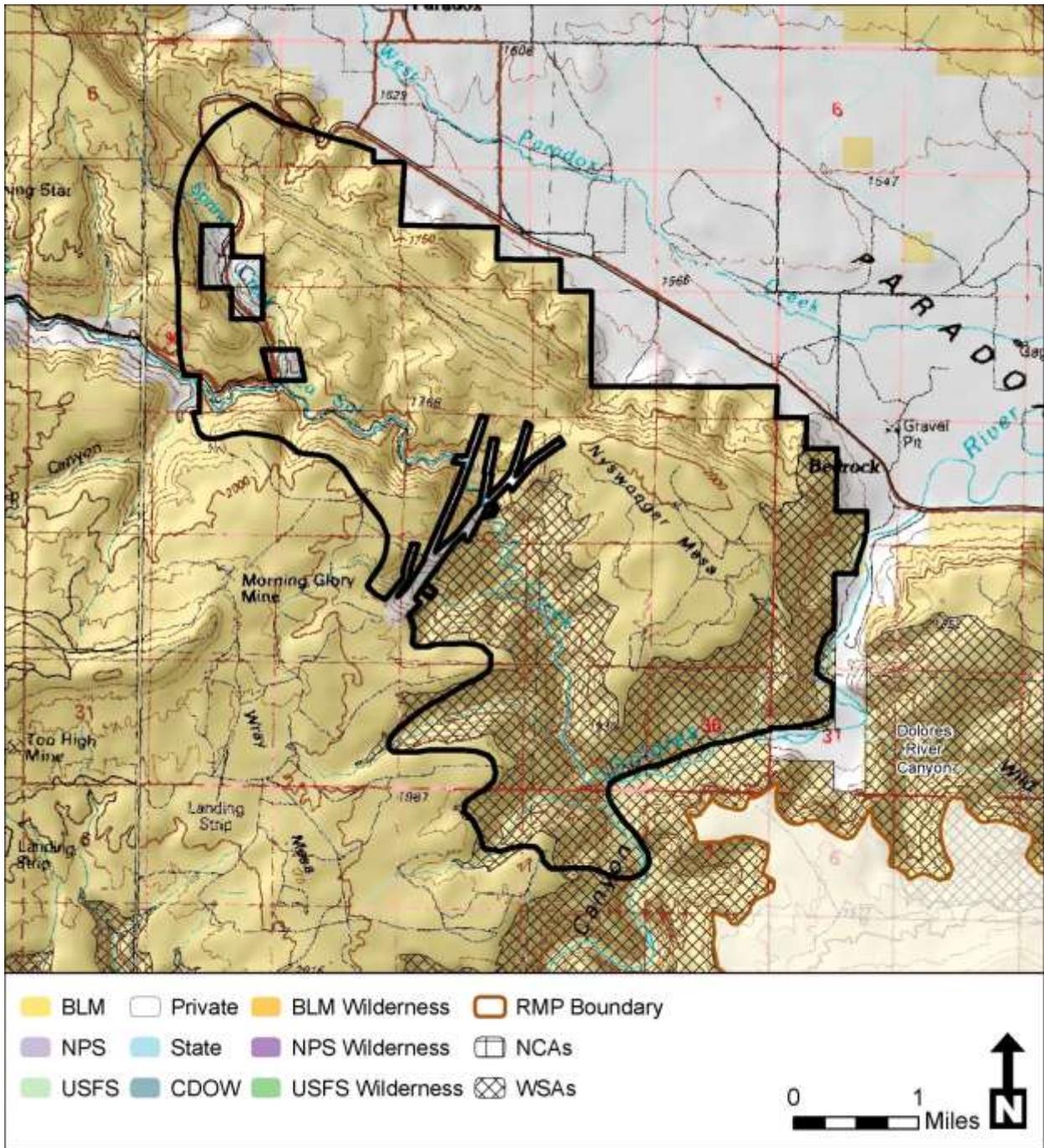
## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	Desert bighorn sheep and peregrine falcon (BLM Sensitive species) inhabit the area. Exemplary populations of three BLM and Colorado sensitive species: flannelmouth suckers ( <i>Catostomus latipinnis</i> ), bluehead suckers ( <i>Catostomus discobolus</i> ), and roundtail chubs ( <i>Gila robusta</i> ).
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Several globally vulnerable and state rare plants are in the proposed ACEC area. The river banks also have box-elder, river birch and red-osier dogwood communities.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	Rare and globally vulnerable plants and plant communities are in the area.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Vulnerable to invasive species that threaten native ecosystems. The globally vulnerable plant communities are difficult to restore.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	A portion of the ACEC is within a WSA.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 17 - La Sal Creek ACEC (Proposed)  
10,500 acres



**ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS**

**17. COYOTE WASH ACEC (Proposed)**

---

**Status:** Proposed

**Proponent:** CNAP

**General Location:** In Montrose County, CO; Coyote Wash to the rim of Wray Mesa.

**Acreage:** 2,100

**Significance:** A spectacular deep canyon with steep cliffs supports hanging gardens and BLM Sensitive plant species. Coyote Wash contains the best known occurrence of the globally imperiled Kachina daisy.

**Description:** Coyote Wash is a steep-sided tributary canyon that joins the Dolores Canyon. Its flat sandy bottom has a small meandering stream that occasionally floods. Colorado’s largest population of Kachina daisy (*Erigeron kachinensis*), a G2/S1 BLM Sensitive Species, occurs along drainages feeding into the wash and canyon; hanging gardens in the canyon walls support Eastwood monkeyflower (*Mimulus eastwoodiae*) a BLM Sensitive species. Isolated benches in the canyon support Great Basin grassland communities in excellent condition.

The south boundary of the ACEC is the Uncompahgre Field Office boundary. Because of this, the proposed ACEC does not include the bottom of the Coyote Wash drainage.

**Values Assessed**

- Botanical: BLM Sensitive Species

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

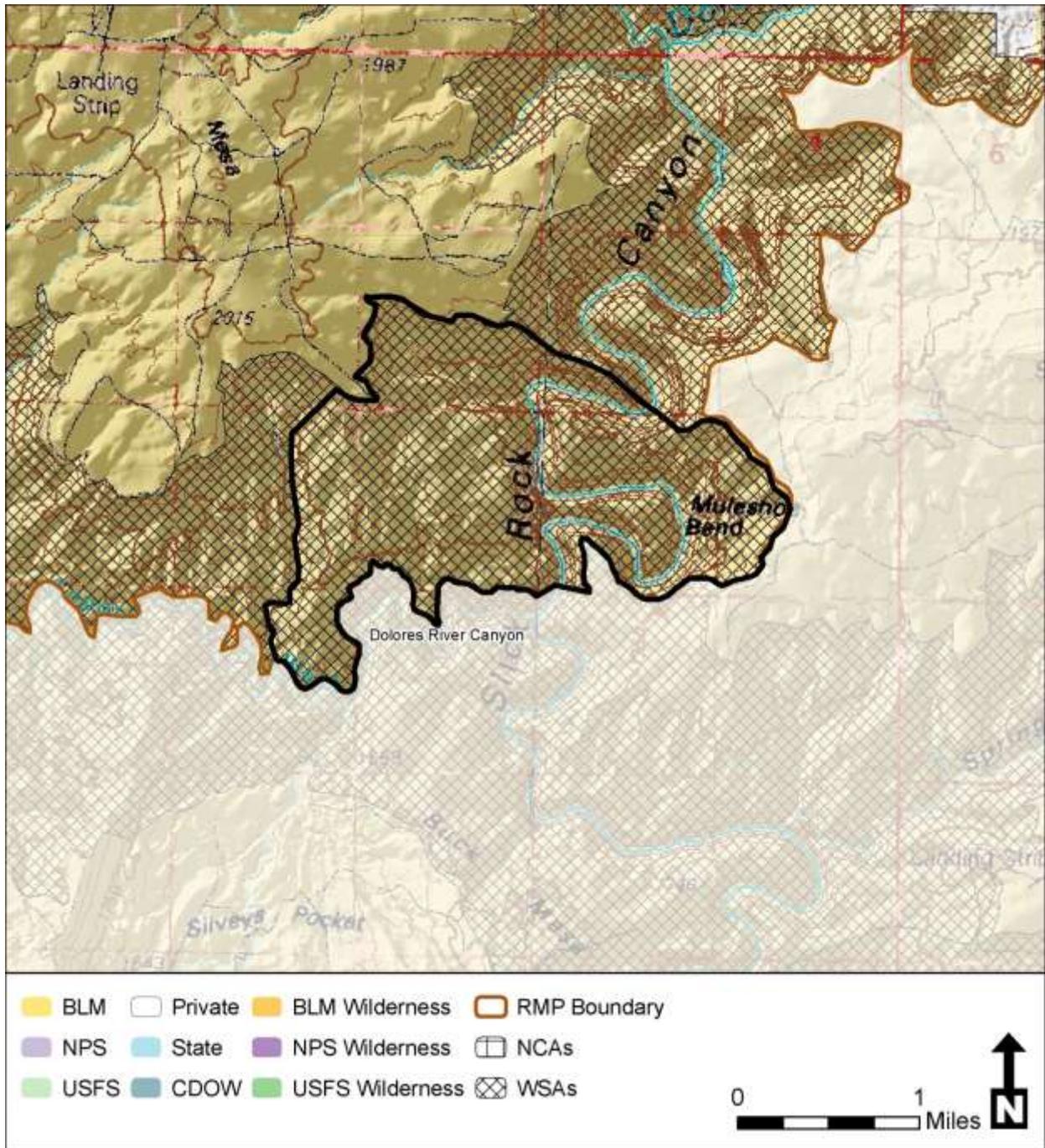
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Several globally vulnerable and state rare plants occur within the proposed ACEC area. The river banks also support box-elder, river birch and red-osier dogwood communities.

**ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS**

<b>IMPORTANCE CRITERION</b>		<b>YES/ NO</b>	<b>RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	BLM Sensitive and rare and globally vulnerable plants and plant communities are in the area.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Globally vulnerable, state rare and BLM Sensitive plants are in the proposed ACEC area.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Within a WSA.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 18 - Coyote Wash ACEC (Proposed)  
2,100 acres



**18. EAST PARADOX ACEC (Proposed) and Biological Soil Crust (Proposed)**

**Status:** Proposed

The BLM has two proposed ACECs for the area. The larger one is called “East Paradox ACEC”, and the smaller ACEC within this area called the “Biological Soil Crust ACEC.”

**Proponent:** BLM

**General Location:** Montrose County, CO, from the west rim of the Dolores River canyon to about six miles east of Dolores River, and from highway 90 to the north rim of Paradox Valley.

**Acres:** 7,360 (Biological Soil Crust ACEC is 1,900 acres)

**Significance:** The proposed ACEC would preserve the best known occurrence of the BLM Sensitive Paradox Valley lupine (*Lupinus crassus*), a higher than normal density and diversity of biological soil crusts (BSC), and two species of BSC that are rare and typically found only on gypsiferous soils.

**Description:** The East Paradox Creek site is located west of Naturita, Colorado and north of Highway 90 as it travels through Paradox Valley. Geologic strata includes the Hermosa, Moenkopi, Cutler, Kayenta, and Chinle formations, and Quaternary alluviums. The site is underlain by multiple soils, including Mikim (ustic torriorthents, fine-loamy, mesic, mixed calcareous soils), Palmer (ustollic haplargids, coarse-loamy, mixed, mesic soils), and Zyme (ustic torriorthents, clayey, montmorillontic calcareous, mesic shallow soils) compositions.

The proposed East Paradox ACEC supports the best known occurrence of Paradox Valley lupine, a globally imperiled (G2/S2) BLM Sensitive species found only in Colorado. There are two excellent (A-ranked) occurrences of Paradox breadroot (*Pediomelum aromaticum*), a BLM Sensitive species considered to be globally vulnerable and rare in Colorado (G3/S2).

Dark red soils apparently derived from the Chinle Formation provide habitat for the Paradox Valley lupine. The soils differ notably from those at the other major lupine location near Naturita. Large populations of Paradox breadroot grow with the lupine, typically further downstream in washes.

Well-developed BSC occurs between plants. Highly gypsiferous soils derived from the Paradox Formation tend to support a higher than normal density and diversity of BSC. During the spring of 2009, BLM Vernal Field Office Botanist Jessie Salix conducted a BSC inventory in the Paradox Valley at the request of the UFO.

The inventory was conducted approximately within T47N, R18W, sections 22, 23, 26, and 27 immediately southeast of the Dolores River and resulted in documentation of the occurrence of two BSC species (*Lecanora gypsicola* and *Gypsoplaca macrophylla*) considered somewhat rare and typically found only on gypsiferous soils. The identification of these species was verified by Dr. Larry St. Clair, a lichenologist at Brigham Young University. Dr.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

St. Clair conveyed to Jessie Salix via e-mail that he felt that the lichen were in need of protection because 1) they occur exclusively on gypsiferous soils (a limited habitat that is commonly mined) and 2) the species occur on less than half of the gypsiferous sites that Dr. St. Clair has inventoried. The location is also the type locality for the Paradox catseye (*Cryptantha paradoxa*).

In addition, the area supports occurrences of a number of wildlife species with conservation significance, the rarest of which are the roundtail chub (*Gila robusta*) and flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*), both BLM Sensitive fish species. Peregrine falcons also nest within the proposed area.

### Values Assessed

- Botanical: *Unique Vegetation Communities and BLM Sensitive Species*
- Fish and Wildlife: *BLM Sensitive Species*

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 2 and 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

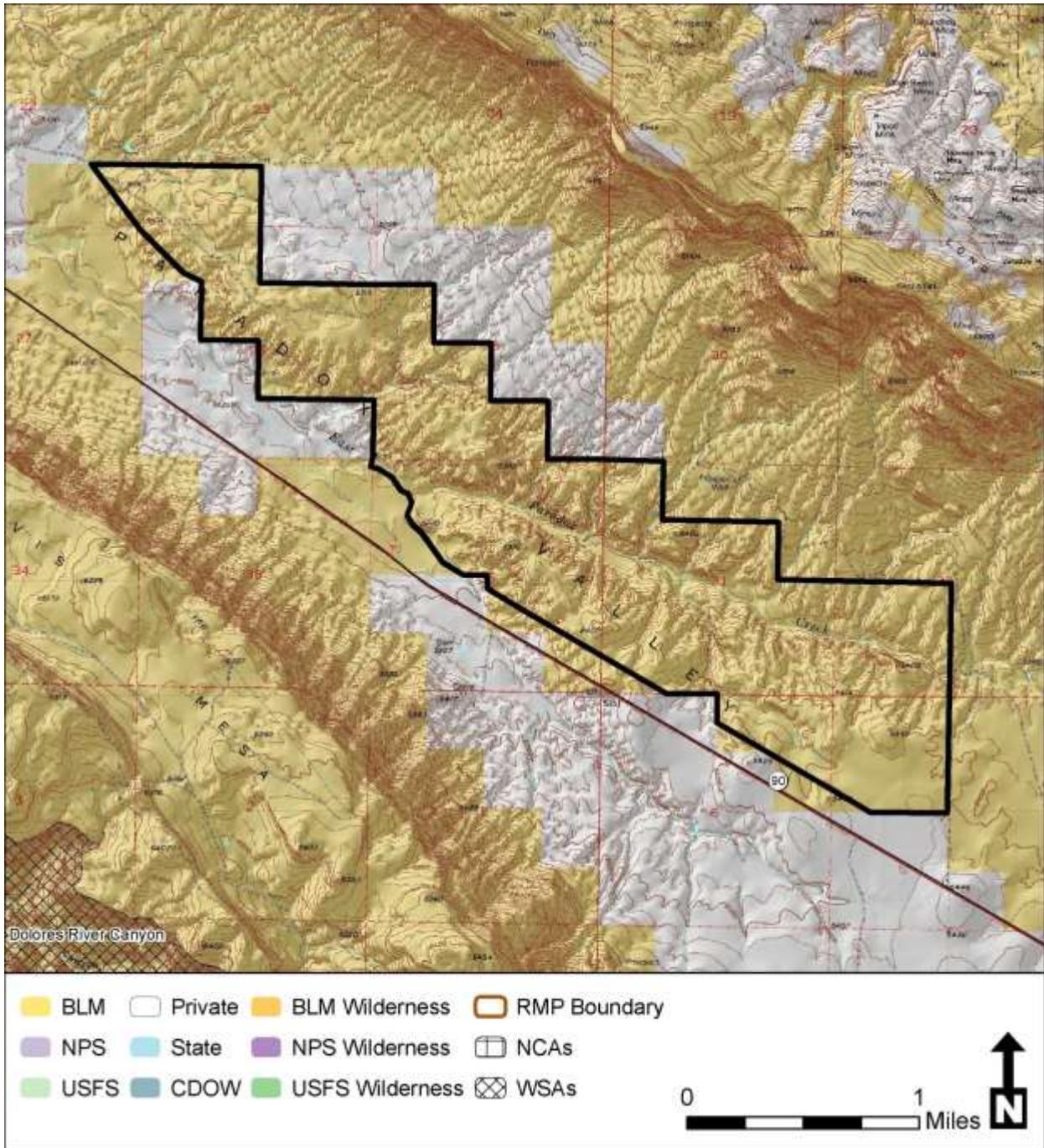
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The Dolores River through the area supports two BLM Sensitive fish species: roundtail chub and flannelmouth sucker. Peregrine falcons nest in the area.
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Supports biological soil crust containing two significant and rare lichen species found only in gypsiferous soil ecosystems.  Supports BLM Sensitive Paradox Valley lupine and Paradox breadroot. Paradox catseye is endemic to gypsiferous soils and somewhat rare only found in eastern Utah, western Colorado, and one site in northwest New Mexico.

**ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS**

<b>IMPORTANCE CRITERION</b>		<b>YES/ NO</b>	<b>RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	Two significant and rare species of biological soil crust are limited to this type locality. The BLM Sensitive Paradox Valley lupine and Paradox breadroot that occur here have national significance.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The biological soil crusts are fragile, easily damaged, and heal slowly. Supports the best known occurrence of sensitive and rare Paradox Valley lupine, which grows only in Colorado. Type locality for Paradox catseye is both scientifically unique and irreplaceable.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	CNHP has recommended the area as a PCA.

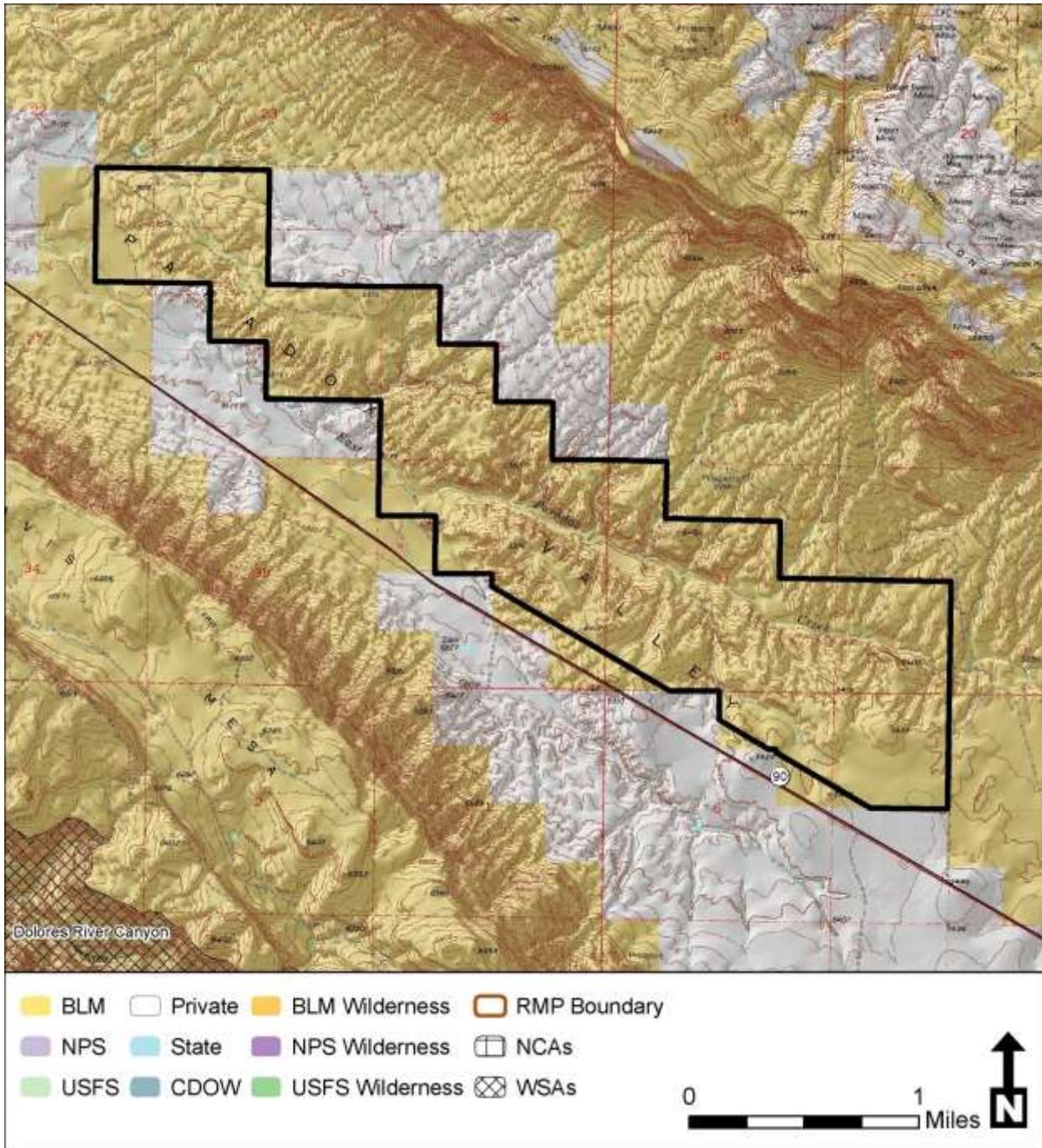
# ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

## ACEC Map 19a - East Paradox ACEC (Proposed) 7,360 acres



# ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

## ACEC Map 18b - Biological Soil Crust ACEC (Proposed) 1,900 acres



## 19. WEST PARADOX ACEC (Proposed)

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**Status:** Proposed

**Proponent:** BLM

**General Location:** Montrose County, CO, from the west rim of the Dolores River canyon to the west end of Paradox Valley, and up to Montrose County Rd Q13.

**Acreage:** 5,190

**Significance:** The proposed ACEC would preserve habitat for the Paradox Valley lupine (*Lupinus crassus*). In addition, the area supports peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) eyries.

**Description:** The West Paradox Valley site is located on the north side of Paradox Valley and west of the Dolores River, on dark red soils derived from the Chinle Formation. This site contains an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence and historical occurrences of Paradox Valley lupine (*Lupinus crassus*), a BLM Sensitive and globally imperiled (G2/S2) species. It also contains Paradox breadroot (*Pediomelum aromaticum*), which is also BLM Sensitive, and a globally vulnerable (G3/S2) plant.

Paradox Valley lupine and Paradox breadroot are both locally common in the bottoms and on the sides of draws at the base of the south-facing slopes, with thousands of individuals of both species and a variety of ages represented.

Other vegetation consists of Utah juniper woodland, with galleta (Genus *Pleuraphis*) and snakeweed (Genus *Gutierrezia*). The plant community is in good condition, with few exotic species present.

The boundary is drawn to encompass known occupied sites of Paradox Valley lupine and Paradox breadroot, while allowing adequate additional habitat for the plants to move or expand their range over time. The proposed area includes the lower edge of the pinyon-juniper community where the two species occur and includes the cliff faces to the canyon rim, which support peregrine falcon eyries.

The area experiences light vehicle use. The land is primarily administered by the BLM, with some private land on the south side.

### **Values Assessed**

- Botanical: *Unique Vegetation Communities and BLM Sensitive Species*
- Fish and Wildlife: *BLM Sensitive Species*

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 2 and 3

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1, 2, and 3

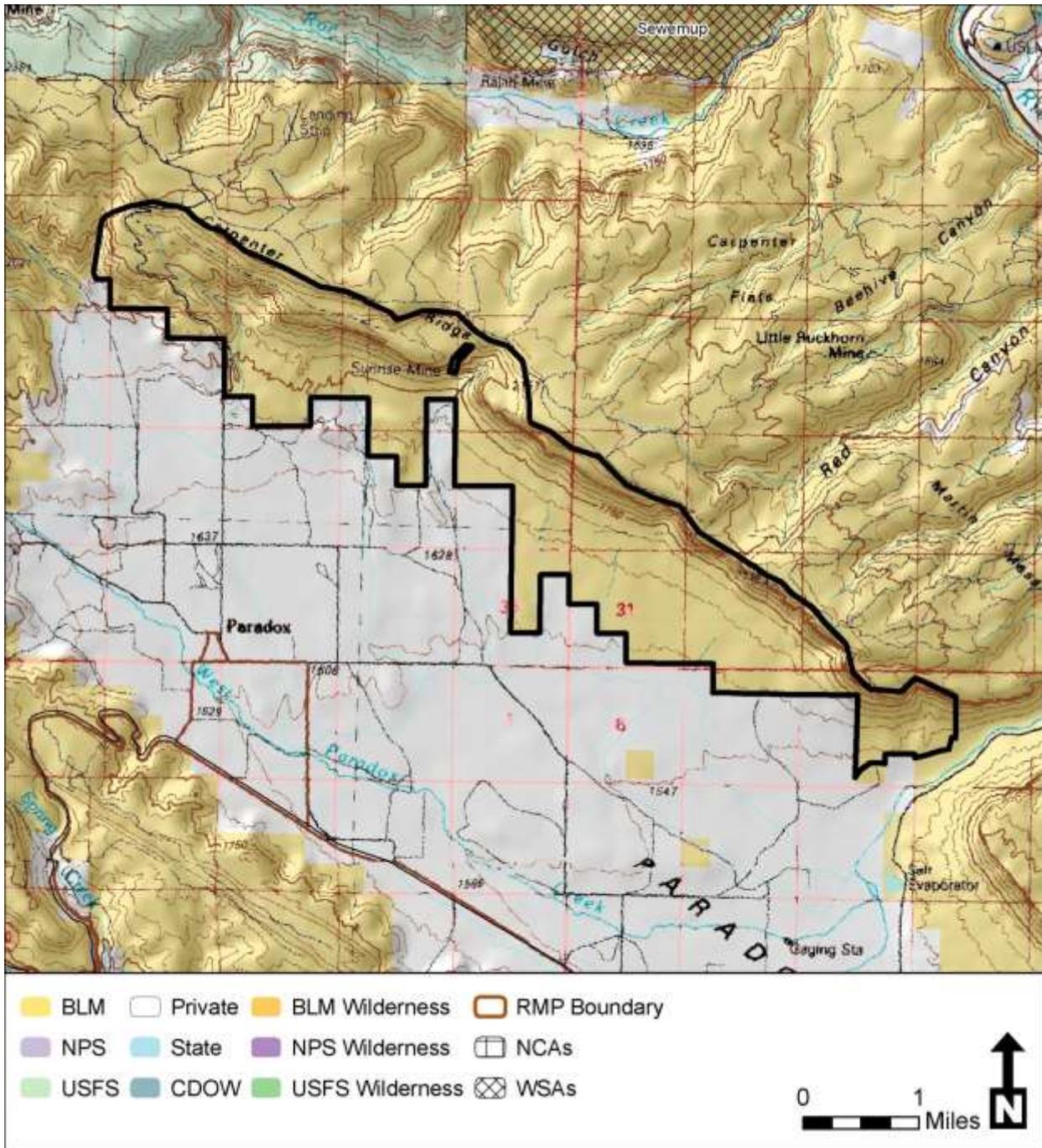
## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The area supports peregrine falcon (a BLM Sensitive species).
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area supports Paradox lupine and Paradox breadroot (BLM Sensitive species).

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	Paradox lupine and Paradox breadroot are BLM Sensitive species; they are also globally imperiled and globally vulnerable, respectively.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Has populations of the sensitive and rare Paradox Valley lupine which grows only in Colorado.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	CNHP has recommended the area as a PCA.

**ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS**

**ACEC Map 19 - West Paradox ACEC (Proposed)  
5,190 acres**



**ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS**

**20. PARADOX ROCK ART ACEC (Proposed)**

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**Proponent:** WSERC, WCC

**General Location:** Montrose County, on the north slope of Paradox Valley, approximately nine miles west of Nucla, CO.

**Acreage:** 1,080

**Significance:** The proposed ACEC contains important rock art and archaeological sites. It is the northern extent Anasazi rock art and occupation. The area also contains Paradox Valley lupine (*Lupinus crassus*).

**Description:** The proposed ACEC is located in the eastern portion of Paradox Valley and contains important rock art panels and archaeological sites, including several outstanding examples of Ancestral Puebloan-style petroglyphs, Formative Period and earlier occupations, features, and isolates, and settled village sites dating back more than five hundred to a thousand years.

The site contains an occurrence and historical occurrences of Paradox Valley lupine (*Lupinus crassus*), a BLM Sensitive and globally imperiled (G2/S2) species. There is potential for conflict between peregrine falcons and hang gliders on the cliffs above Paradox.

**Values Assessed**

- Cultural

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 1

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1 and 2

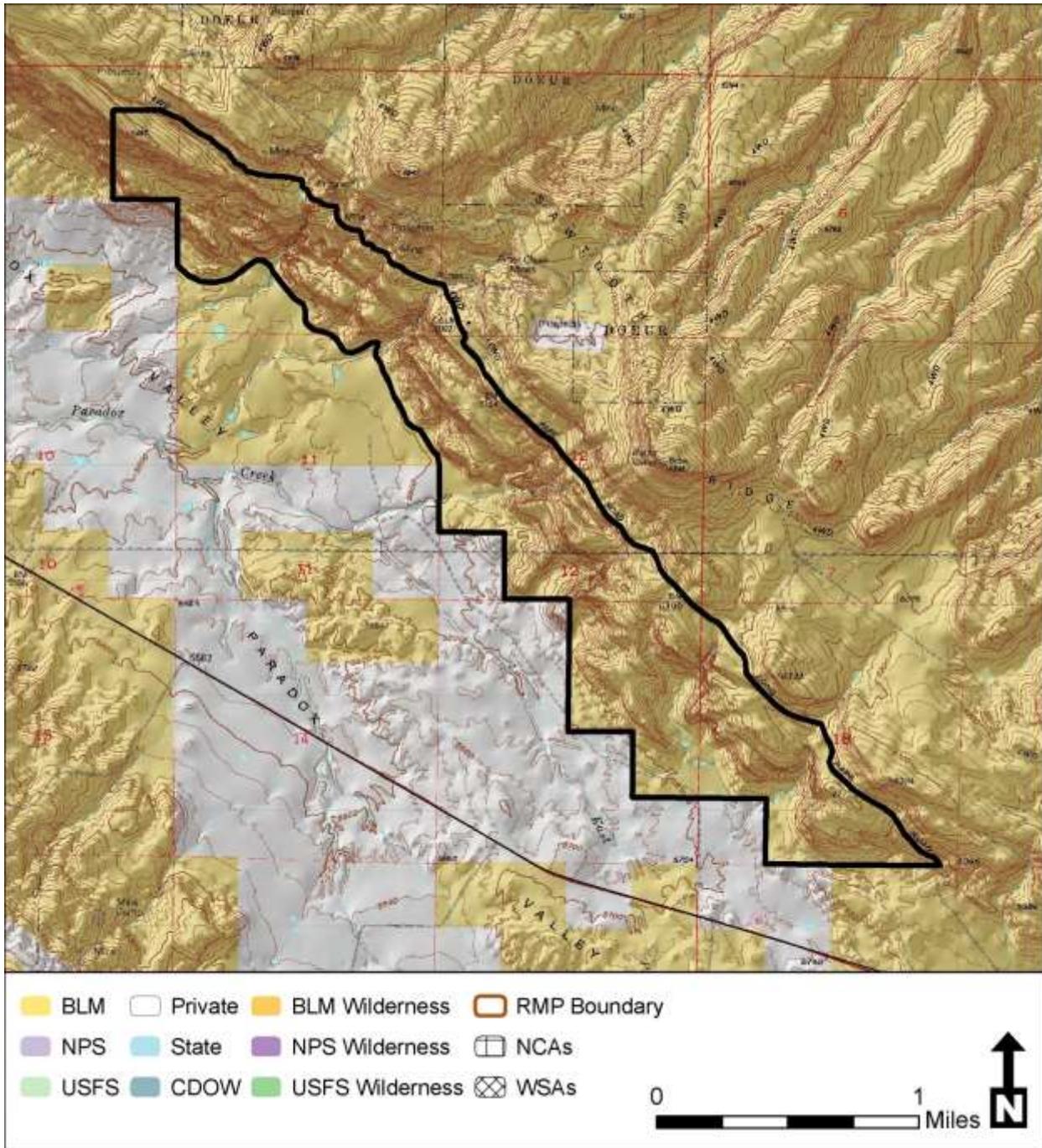
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	Rare northern extent Anasazi rock art and occupation. VRI Class 2.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	Inter-state and Regional significance due to Anasazi rock art.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Fragile and irreplaceable if damaged.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 20 - Paradox Rock Art ACEC (Proposed)  
1,080 acres



**ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS**

**21. TABEGUACHE PUEBLO/TABEGUACHE CAVES ACEC (Proposed)**

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**Status:** Proposed

**Proponent:** WSERC, WCC

**General Location:** Montrose County, approximately six miles north of Nucla, CO, from the Uncompahgre National Forest to about two miles east of old Uravan; along Tabeguache Creek and Spring Creek, and areas in between.

**Acreage:** 26,400

**Significance:** The proposed ACEC contains important archaeological sites that show a relationship between the Fremont and Anasazi cultures. There is some evidence of farming (corn production).

**Description:** The proposed ACEC includes part of the Tabeguache Special Management Area. The Tabeguache Pueblo and Tabeguache Caves are important both to the prehistory of the region and to the history of archaeology in Colorado, being some of the earliest explored and described archaeological sites in the state. In addition to their historic interest, both Tabeguache caves and the pueblos still contain intact archaeological deposits dating to the Formative period Anasazi, or Ancestral Puebloan people.

**Values Assessed**

- Cultural

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 1

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1 and 2

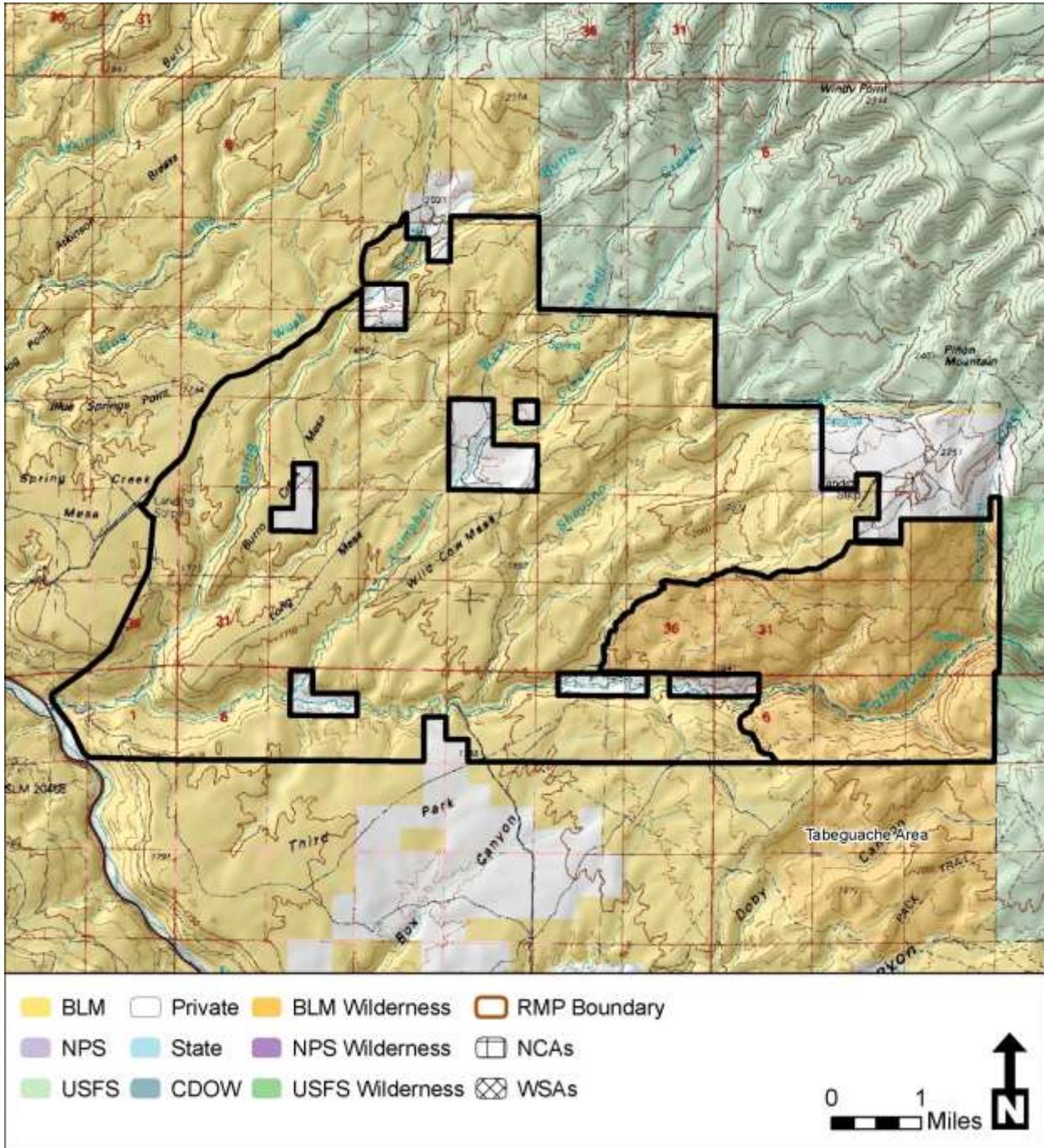
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	Contains important archaeological sites that show a relationship between the Fremont and Anasazi cultures.

## ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area is important to the history of archaeology in North America.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The archaeological sites are fragile and irreplaceable if damaged.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 21 - Tabeguache Pueblo/Tabeguache Caves ACEC (Proposed)  
26,400 acres



**22. TABEGUACHE CREEK ACEC/ONA (Existing)**

**Status:** Existing.

**General Location:** In Montrose County, approximately seven miles north of the town of Nucla, and within the Tabeguache Special Management Area.

**Acreage:** 560

**Significance:** The Tabeguache Creek ACEC and ONA is managed to protect cultural resources. The ACEC/ONA contains important archaeological sites that show a relationship between the Fremont and Anasazi cultures. There is some evidence of farming (corn production).

**General Description:** The 1985 San Juan/San Miguel RMP designated the area as Tabeguache Creek Outstanding Natural Area (ONA). An ONA is considered an ACEC. The ACEC/ONA is completely within the Tabeguache Special Management Area. The Tabeguache Creek ACEC/ONA is important both to the prehistory of the region and to the history of archaeology in Colorado. It has some of the earliest explored and described archaeological sites in the state. The ACEC contains intact archaeological deposits dating to the Formative period Anasazi, or Ancestral Puebloan people.

**Values Assessed**

- Cultural

**Relevance Criteria Considered:** 1

**Importance Criteria Considered:** 1 and 2

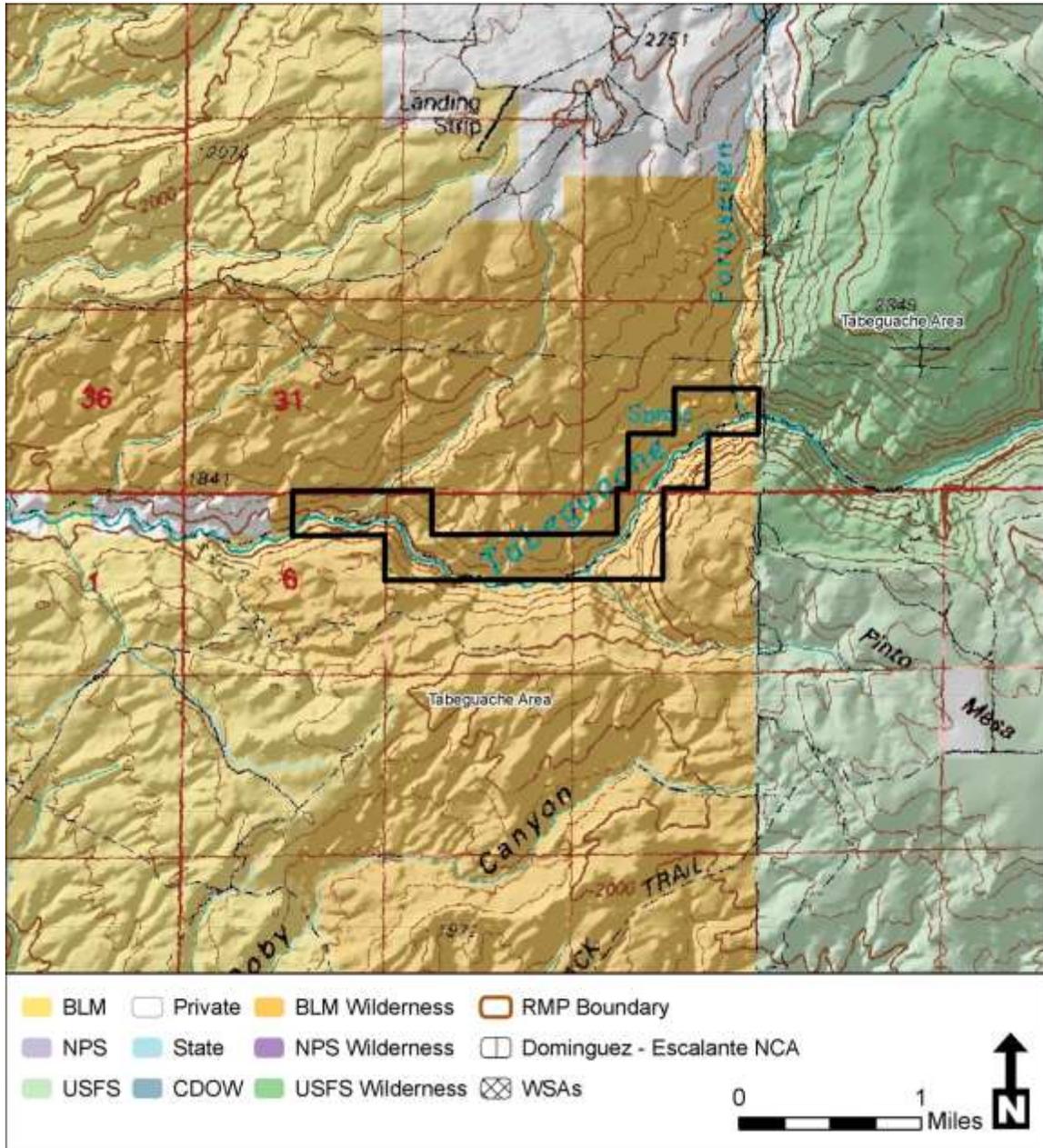
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	DESCRIPTION		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	Contains important archaeological sites that show a relationship between the Fremont and Anasazi cultures.

**ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS**

<b>IMPORTANCE CRITERION</b>		<b>YES/ NO</b>	<b>RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area is important to the history of archaeology in North America.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The archaeological sites are fragile and irreplaceable if damaged.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 22 – Tabeguache Creek ACEC/ONA (Existing)



## INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM MEMBERS

### 5.0 - INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM MEMBERS

The following Uncompahgre Field Office Staff participated in determining the relevance and importance of the nominated and existing ACECs.

NAME	TITLE
Debbie Burch	Range Technician
Amanda Clements	Ecologist
Rob Ernst	Geologist
Glade Hadden	Archaeologist
Ken Holsinger	Natural Resource Specialist
Dan Huisjen	Fire Ecologist
Julie Jackson	Outdoor Recreation Planner
Bruce Krickbaum	Planner
Jeff Litteral	Hydrologist (former)
D. Maggie Magee	Technical Writer-Editor
Teresa Pfifer	Land and Minerals Supervisor
Linda Reed	Realty Specialist
Lynae Rogers	Rangeland Management Specialist
Charles Sharp	Wildlife and T&E Biologist (former)
Barbara Sharrow	Field Manager
Melissa Siders	Wildlife and T&E Biologist
David Sinton	GIS Specialist
Jedd Sondergard	Hydrologist
Dean Stindt	Rangeland Management Specialist (former)
Thane Stranathan	Natural Resource Specialist
Karen Tucker	Recreation Staff Supervisor

## 6.0 - REFERENCES

### **Bureau of Land Management**

- 1988 Manual H-1613, *Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*.
- 2000 Colorado BLM State Director's Sensitive Species List (Animals and Plants).  
Webpage: [http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM\\_Programs/botany/Sensitive\\_Species\\_List\\_.html](http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Programs/botany/Sensitive_Species_List_.html)
- 2007 *San Juan Public Lands Center Draft Land Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Durango, Colorado.
- 2008 *Moab Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan*. Moab Field Office, Utah.
- 2008b *Monticello Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan*. Moab Field Office, Utah.
- 2008c *Preparation Plan for the Uncompahgre Resource Management Plan*. Uncompahgre Field Office. Montrose, Colorado.

### **Colorado Division of Wildlife**

- 2005 Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee, Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Conservation Plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado.

### **Colorado Natural Heritage Program**

- 2009 Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Reports. Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO.

### **FLPMA**

- 1976 Section 202 (43 US Code 1712[c][3]) Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Public Law 94-579, as amended.

### **National Audubon Society**

- 2010 Important Bird Areas in the U.S. Available online at: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/liba>

### **StClair, Larry**

- 2009 Email communication regarding lichens in Paradox Valley. Larry StClair, Brigham Young University, Utah.

## 7.0 - Appendices

### Appendix A: UFO RMP Scoping ACEC Fact Sheet

4.3	<p><b>BLM UNCOMPAHGRE FIELD OFFICE</b>  <b>RMP PLANNING FACT SHEET</b>  <i>Areas of Critical Environmental Concern</i></p>	<p>Barbara Sharrow, UFO Field Manager                  2485 S. Townsend Ave, Montrose, CO 81401                  Office hours are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm                  Phone: (970) 240-5300   TDD (970) 240-5388                  FAX (970) 240-5387</p>
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The BLM Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) is revising the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Uncompahgre planning area. The Uncompahgre RMP will provide detailed information about the current state of resources on public lands within the planning area, and set forth a plan of action for managing those resources for the next twenty or so years under the BLM's dual mandate of *multiple use and sustained yield*.

*Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*, commonly known as *ACECs*, are public lands where special management is required in order to protect the area's values. To be eligible for designation as an ACEC, an area must meet criteria for both *relevance* and *importance*. An ACEC possesses significant historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish or wildlife resources (including habitat, communities, or species), natural processes or systems, or natural hazards. In addition, the significance of these values and resources must be substantial in order to satisfy the importance criteria.



#### ACECs IN THE PLANNING AREA

The Uncompahgre planning area contains four ACECs, which were designated in the two existing RMPs:

ACEC	AREA (ACRES)	VALUES
Fairview	374	Large population of a listed endangered plant species and significant populations of a candidate plant species
Needle Rock	83	A volcanic geological structure with high-value scientific, interpretive, and scenic characteristics
Adobe Badlands	6,383	Consists of Mancos Shale hills and flats which, through wind and water erosion, have formed unique scenic formations. The area's soils are highly erodible and saline, resulting in high sediment loads and very saline runoff. The area also contains known and potential habitat for several endangered and threatened plant species.
San Miguel	22,841	Unique, high quality riparian vegetation resources, the scenic values of the corridor, and preservation of relic riparian communities

#### PROTECTING SIGNIFICANT VALUES

Restrictions arising from ACEC designation are proposed during the final RMP revision and are part of the final decision process. Restrictions are designed to protect the values and/or serve the purposes for which the designation was made. Management prescriptions are developed expressly to protect the important and relevant values of an area. Such measures would not be necessary or prescribed if the critical and important features were not present.



BLM 4.3—Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

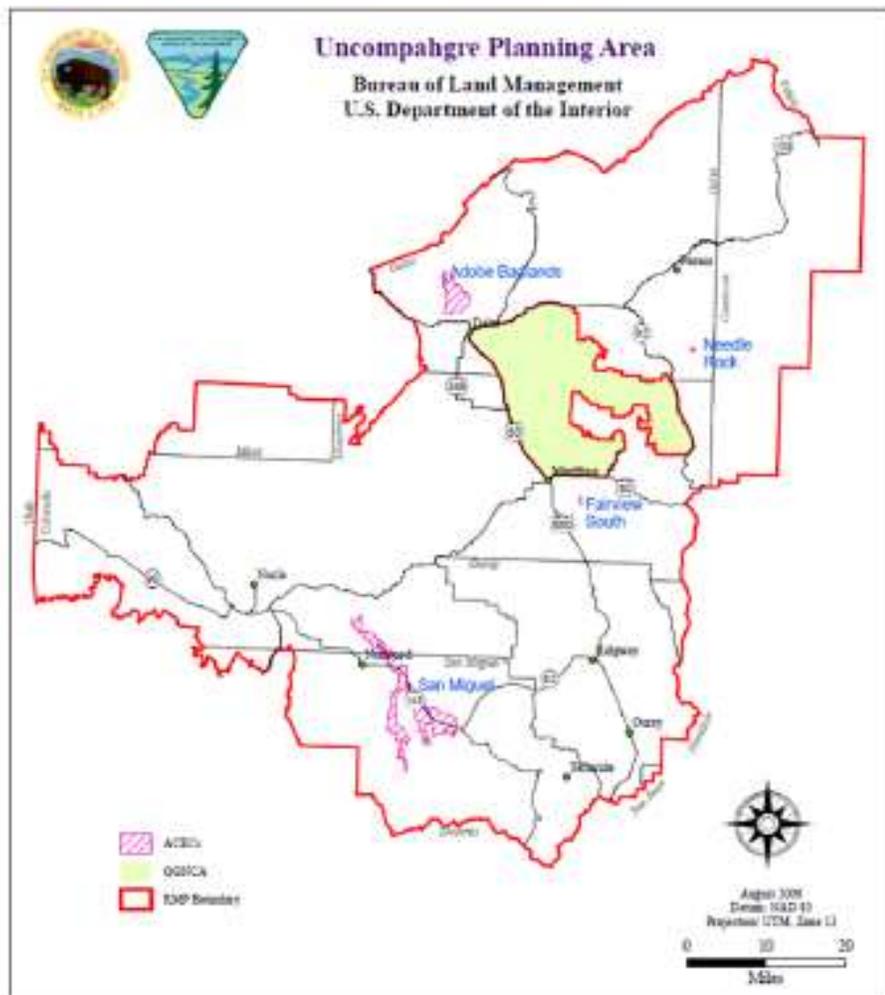
RMP Scoping ACEC Fact Sheet - Page 2

REVIEW OF NEW AND EXISTING ACECs

As part of the RMP revision, existing ACECs will be reevaluated to determine whether:

- the ACEC's relevant and important values are still present and require continued management attention
- threats of irreparable damage to the values have been identified
- current management is sufficient to protect the values.

In addition, new ACECs nominated during the public scoping period will be evaluated for relevance and importance.



The BLM wants your input...

- Do you know of any areas within the planning area that meet the criteria for becoming an ACEC?

Any individual or organization may nominate an ACEC during the public scoping period. The nomination should describe the area's special values. Information on why the area meets relevance and importance criteria (43 CFR 1610.7-2) must be included in the nomination.

UFO Planning Webpage:  
[www.UFORMP.com](http://www.UFORMP.com)

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UFO 1/2010

APPENDIX B – UFO RMP SCOPING ACEC DISPLAY

Appendix B: UFO RMP Scoping ACEC Display Panel





Evaluation of Proposed and Existing  
**AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN**  
for the Uncompahgre Planning Area